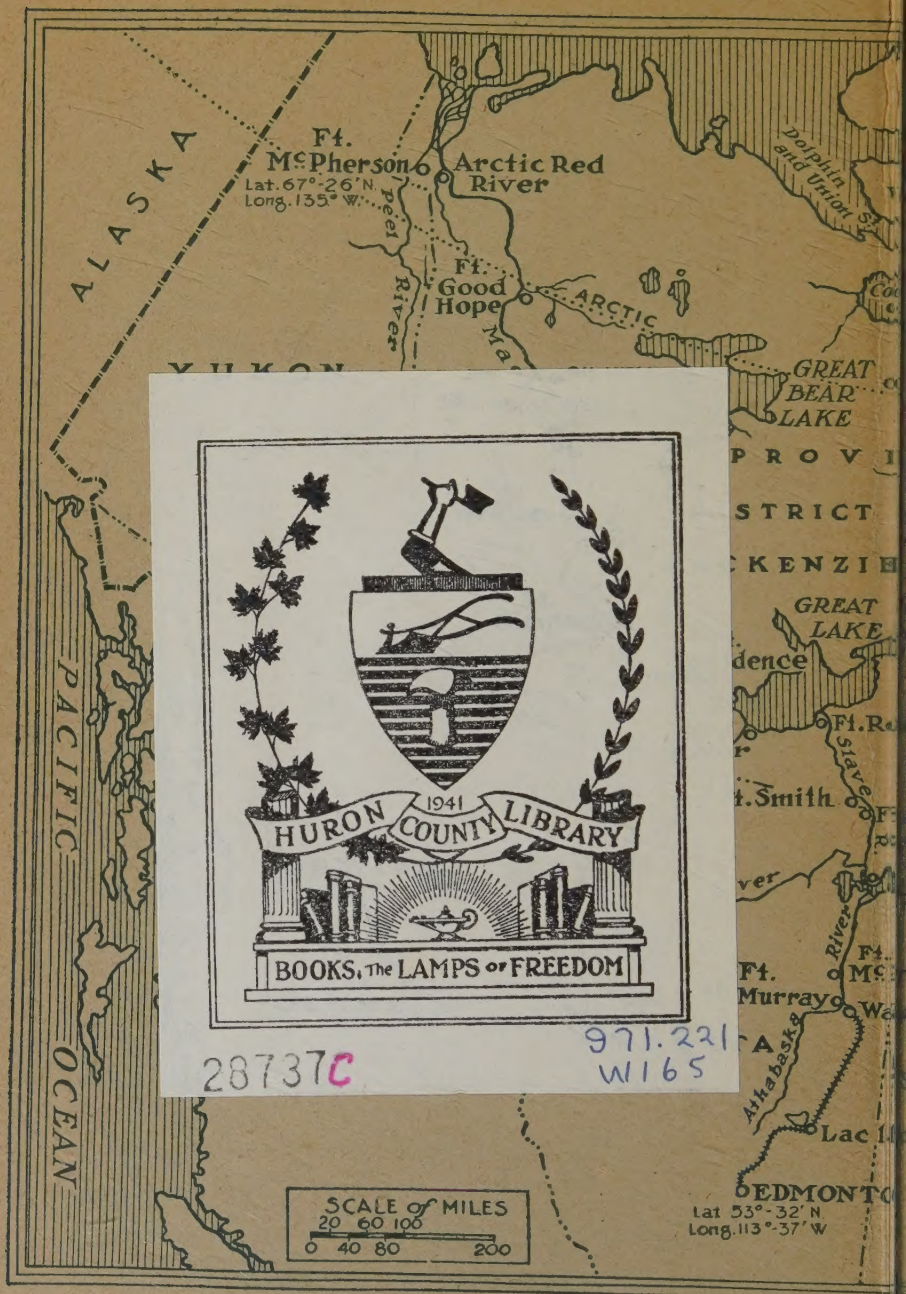
DOWN THE MACKENZIE

FULLERTON WALDO



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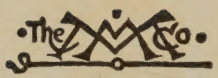

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Where Big Rivers Begin
(The Canadian Rockies, Alberta)

DOWN THE MACKENZIE THROUGH THE GREAT LONE LAND

BY

FULLERTON WALDO

Illustrated

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1923

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To

ELEANOR BUSHNELL DAVIS

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DOWN THE MACKENZIE
THROUGH
THE GREAT LONE LAND

DOWN THE MACKENZIE

CHAPTER I

THE LAST HOUSE IN THE WORLD

EDMONTON used to be called "the last house in the world." The name was given by those who trekked northwest in ox-carts, nine hundred miles in three months from Winnipeg, easily within the memories of men still in the prime of life. To-day, by train, the distance is less than eight hundred miles, and the time is a little over twenty-six hours. To-day, one thinks of Edmonton not as the last house in the world but as the first of a sub-Arctic empire, with its portal wide-flung to a domain of over a million square miles, as large as Europe from Spain to Russia, from which a Pennsylvania might be carved twenty-five times over. The province of Alberta, of which Edmonton is capital, reaches from the Montana line to the north as far as Philadelphia is from Hudson Bay.[1]

An English catalog for a certain German museum says, "The eye of the visitor on entering the next room will be struck with a porcelain umbrella." The first thing that strikes your eye like a great steel bar as you enter Edmonton (if by the Canadian Pacific) is the giant railway bridge that spans the gorge of the Sas-

[1] The Bay is "Hudson"; the Company is "Hudson's."

katchewan between Strathcona, now suburban to the greater city, on the south bank, and the part on the north side of the river. The Canadian Pacific and the city put $1,500,000 into the bridge, when it was plain that no power on earth could call a halt on the rising tide of immigration and confine it to Strathcona, where the C. P. railway terminal and the car-shops were.

Edmonton had to grow. From the long, low white stack of the Hudson's Bay trading post, whose factors with their families and their dogs were the whole of the settlement, it grew to a population of about two hundred a third of a century ago, and now there are close upon seventy thousand souls where the dogs quarreled in the traces and the "silent smoky Indian," like Matthew Arnold's Iberian, undid his corded bales.

As I told the Rotary Club at their weekly luncheon in the Château Macdonald, I knew Edmonton was no one-horse city: but I was not prepared by the last Baedeker of Canada, published in 1907, for what I saw. The Château Macdonald itself, eleven stone stories to the peak, was a modern miracle of parquetry and tiling and plumbing, solid comfort and punctilious service. In my room were pictures—Sir Joshua's "Miss Simplicity," Madame Vigée Le Brun's portrait of herself with her daughter, and besides these an old French print and a modern English chromo—with cretonne curtains at the clean windows through which to peer from the depths of a morris chair into the depths of the gorge of the Saskatchewan. The walls of this gorge are a natural parkway of poplars, in dark-green sentinel solemnity; here and there a road strikes through them from the water, or a cottage is planted.

Indian Tepees

The High-Level Bridge

There is a golf-course on each bank—one private, the other public—and a large part of the population rises betimes to possess itself of the fairway of the public course on a holiday morning.

The river does as it willfully pleases: it turns no wheel, and it feels no paddle. It is nearly as free as the wind or the sun. Two ancient steamers—one wrecked in the stream, one high on the bank—are the rotting visible evidence of a struggle given over to the mud-brown or soup-green current, where "eddy into eddy whirls and ripple ripple over-curls." One water-puss plays tag with the next, the pulses of the breeze send one shadow after another scurrying across the rapid, sliding, intervolved current—it were better to say currents—like the wind over a wheatfield. It is risky to float a canoe or a motor-boat—the occupants may soon be crying for help or clinging to the keel of their overturned vessel for the stream to pick off one by one. What is the river good for? Hydro-electric power, obviously, such as they telegraph overland by two lines at Winnipeg. But Edmonton, with thirty-four bituminous coal mines in and around the city, does not now need to harness the river. In time, should the necessity arise, the river may be drawn upon as a reservoir of energy. Meanwhile, old as it is, it plays like a child, it runs like a colt, wild and foot-loose, with the sun in its face all summer long: a roaring, buffeting monster when the ice goes out in spring. Imagine how angry it is against a bridge in the way! The butting and heaving, the crashing and grinding and rending are of no avail against the high-level bridge, with its roadway, footway, bicycle-way, two trolley-tracks and railway-track hung in space, but the low-level bridges

tremble for their lives in the onset of the ice, and sometimes a mad flood dispossesses the lowlanders. To hold down one of the bridges in flood-time a gravel train was put on it, and divided in the middle, an engine at each end to haul its half away if the bridge was seen to be collapsing while houses and shacks drove against the abutments and were smashed to kindling wood. The spirit of Edmonton rises to every such challenge, major or minor, in just such ways.

For you cannot hold back the spirit of such a people. It is not merely that the blood of stalwart pioneers runs strong as the Saskatchewan in the veins of their descendants. The pioneers themselves are still vigorous in the tidal life of the community. You can see in the way they carry themselves that they have been at the back of the North Wind. Their faces are rosy with the flush of prairie sunsets. Their hair is white with the snows of northern winters. They stand like seasoned oak, and walk with no waste motion. They were the hewers of wood, the drawers of water, the men who did things for themselves and got what they went after, never expecting anything to be handed to them on a tray. You and I have entered into the fruit of their labors. Their steel-blue eyes are wise and kind and farseeing; they have large and tolerant ways; and they do not tell their stories unsolicited. They leave it to the tenderfoot to brag—to tell of cold winters, to narrate his own exploits, to embroider the privations that he suffered in getting up at five or doing without steam heat, electric light and running water and French rolls. The pioneer thinks of staving off the Indians, of tending cattle in a blizzard, or running the rapids in canoe or York boat, or

crossing the prairie in a Red River ox-cart where no roads were, or fighting forest fires that encircled his homestead, or nursing sick wife and children hundreds of miles from a doctor, far from a neighbor. The pioneer, who knows, thinks his own thoughts, keeps his mouth shut, and lets the young and foolish blabberer run on unrebuked. He has done his work—he knows what's what—he would not give his memories for the young man's luxuries. But the bean-headed, pasty-faced, ice-cream-hatted, toothpick-toed, movie-haunting, slang-slinging city-bred youth had better think twice ere he smiles once at the veteran. "The automobile sons of the buckboard fathers." The veteran made possible the bright lights and the tramways, the asphalt, the pile of steel on steel, and stone on stone, and all that is the city.

And what a city it is! Numbered streets cross numbered avenues, one hundred to the block, so that when you hear an address you know at once where it is and where you are. All thoroughfares are wide, with an eye to the future, put down by those who knew their city was to grow. The multiplicity of two-story houses makes for domestic content under one's own Virginia creeper and balm-of-Gilead or poplar tree, like the family happiness of an American city in which there are individual homes instead of "multiple dwellings" or teeming rookeries. The people are proud of the place, and glad to show it off; but I heard no windy boast that the facts did not justify. Ostentation and vain pretense had no part in the overwhelming inundation of their hospitality to an utter stranger. All they expected in return was the plain truth told about them: they feel that as they have shown the world how livable this part

of it is, they are entitled to a hearing that is free from the poison-gas of malice, the yellow peril of sensational journalism, or the mischief of the muck-rake.

Some southern folk seem to think that Edmonton is not far removed from a cluster of Eskimo igloos, or at any rate Indian teepees. The first thing that ought to be knocked into their heads is the idea Stefansson expounds and enforces in "The Friendly Arctic"—the idea that with decent care for fingers and nose a searching winter cold is no bad thing for health and is, on the other hand, a spur to manliness and bold initiative. When Edward Whymper was in the Andes, his Swiss guide looked at wretched natives squatting in their rags scratching their flea-bites and said, "What these people need is a winter!" Progress is not with the languorous tropics, amid the atolls of the South Seas, or under the fronds of O'Brien's Tahiti. It is with the people who fear a falling barometer as little as they fear the Aurora Borealis. The superstitions about the North find it hard to live above the forty-ninth parallel. Beyond that line they encounter the people who live in the North and so prove that the North can be lived in. It will be no use to give these people books or moving pictures that falsify the facts of life they know. It stirs their laughter when they see on the films a couple of hundred Mounted Police turning out in their shirt-sleeves, like firemen sliding down a pole, to arrest an Indian, for they know it isn't done that way. The arm of the law often strikes from the resolute person of one man in that highly respected uniform.

Temperatures? Yes, there are temperatures. Stefansson has much to say of them, in a most illuminating

way. The lowest temperature given for Fort McPherson on the Mackenzie delta, 68° below, is the same as for northern Montana just below the Alberta line. The lowest record for Herschel Island, last of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police posts, in Beaufort Sea in the Arctic, west of the Mackenzie River mouth, is 54° below. Stefansson in 1910 enjoyed or endured a temperature of 90° in the shade nearly every day for six weeks together. The maximum at Fort Yukon is 90° in the shade. This year (1922) it was 32° at Edmonton June 5th, and on June 6th there was a snow-flurry. The same day showed a temperature of 96° at Winnipeg—the highest in ten years. Next morning at Winnipeg the temperature had dropped to 50°; by noon it had returned to 61°. On the evening of June 6th it was 22° at Vegreville, Alberta, and 20° at Estevan, Saskatchewan. Corn and beans were hurt, grain did not greatly suffer. Wheat is raised at Fort Vermilion on the Peace River, some 350 miles north of Edmonton, and even at Liard, north of the sixtieth parallel. That parallel is accepted as about the present limit of wheat-raising, but the limit is sure to be pushed steadily northward. In a June week at Edmonton I wanted nothing heavier than a sheet for covering when I slept, yet the nights felt cool and dry as compared with a typical summer night in Philadelphia. The street-car lines in Edmonton scarcely require snow-plows—little ones no higher than the wheels may be called into service two or three times in a winter. The snow does not drift in the streets as it does in eastern cities. Neither do the people—unless it is a fire or a band or a parade or some other good reason.

I visited the University of Alberta, to see its exten-

sion work. There is a group of brick buildings, finely wrought, trimmed with white stone, and at the edge of the campus are experimental fields to discover what will or will not grow in northern latitudes. The only kind of apple that survives the frost is the crab-apple, but plenty of good fruit of every sort is brought to Edmonton for sale at prices no higher than those prevailing in lower latitudes. There were many cinema reels ready to be sent to all points of the compass, and boxes of books to be given out by a circulating library worthy of the name. In the city public library last year 18,000 subscribers asked for 320,000 volumes.

The human exhibit at the University was the best. Ere the six weeks' summer session for teachers began, a school for farm children was held for a week. Some of the students had not seen a railway train before they came. They were sent by organizations at home that would look for a report from them when they returned. I saw a hundred of them abloom in the spotless white Convocation Hall listening to an illustrated lecture on French history; and after it some one recited for them Drummond's habitant poetry—to their closest attention and their unrestrained delight.

Dr. Ottewell, head of the department, spreads his ample personality all over the province with lectures. One of these was given to a negro colony a hundred miles from Edmonton. In the dim light of the single lamp, little could be seen of the audience but rows of teeth gleaming like corn-ears. The proceedings opened with the reading of a home-brewed newspaper which one of the young negresses had herself written. This item was received with utter solemnity: "Sister Payne went to de convention ob de Saints ob God. While she

The University of Alberta

On a Peace River Farm

was away she put her chickens in de care ob de Lawd. When she came back, dey was nearly all daid."

It is the people's university. They write to it not as to an institution but as to a person, a friend in need, to get information for a crop or a domestic problem or a debate. Academic pomp and circumstance, red tape and routine stand aside under Dr. Torey to the educational service of two thousand earnest young men and women with "their souls in the work of their hands," and their purpose to be good citizens and help to build a state.

Community spirit here is of the right kind—repudiating in disgust the predatory and confiscatory doctrine of Russian communism. The Bolshevist creed is a noxious growth that cannot flourish in the rich black loam of Alberta with the oats and wheat. Perhaps the most vivid illustration of the richness of that soil was that of the man who said the cucumber vines grew so fast that they wore out the cucumbers dragging them along the ground. It is still proudly remembered here that it was Alberta wheat that took the prize at the Centennial in Philadelphia, in 1876.

Here is an instance of the way the people play the game all together. G. H. Coward, of Briercrest, Saskatchewan, lost his barn and thirteen horses in a fire at the end of May. He had finished his wheat seeding. He still had one hundred and ninety acres of oats to plant in stubble ground. The neighbors got together at the instance of one of their number. On Wednesday, May 31st, they mobilized with a hundred and twelve horses and twenty-four outfits, including twelve double-disks and eleven six-horse drills, for the nicest sort of surprise-party. The women served dinner to

the workers. The hundred and ninety acres were double-disked and seeded by the end of the afternoon, and a broken, discouraged man took heart again for "a hazard of new fortunes" and thanked God for such friends. Of course he would at any time have done the like for any one of them, had the shoe been on his neighbor's limping foot instead of his own.

The exhibition grounds where the annual fair is held set an example to much larger places. At the edge of the fair grounds is a wooded grassy plot, set aside for rural visitors who cannot very well take their abounding families to one of the hotels. There are skeleton frames for tent houses, and there is room to park the family Ford beside them; and in addition there is a free space where in seignorial independence one may set up his tent without a framework. Boiling water is on tap close at hand. But if you want water to wade and not to wash in, there is a pool clear and green, with a sliding board that dumps you shouting merrily and with a loud walloping splash that reminds one of a certain negro baptism at New Orleans, when the preacher explained that "Baptism am derived from de good old Greek word 'bap,' which means de sound dat de candidate makes as he, she or it hits de water—'bap'!"

Mrs. Ellis, the lively live-stock editor of the *Bulletin,* took me to the stockyards, where there were fine cattle to be seen, but there is not one rat to wiggle a guilty whisker. I was weighed on scales as sensitive as a New England conscience and was told that I qualified for bacon but not for lard. Though I was glad to hear of a fairly active market for my patient brothers of hoof and horn about me, I felt the pathos of the situation

for a farmer who brings in his cattle from afar, only to learn that they are so thin he cannot get more than a cent and a half a pound for them. He must take his animals home at a dead loss for hundreds of miles—it may be—of hauling, or rent some nearer place to feed them till they qualify in an expert appraisal. Perhaps his Alberta winter left him the means for neither of these alternatives; and there are children's faces in the window for his homecoming. They expect father to bring them something more than a leaden heart and a sad visage from the city.

We boast that there is no line of fortresses betwixt America and Canada, but the barrier of a high protective tariff that our selfishness has reared is almost as bad. Western Canada needs our farming machinery; we need her cattle, her grain and pulp-wood. If the Golden Rule is too quixotic for statesmanship to follow, then let politicians on either side of the boundary be instructed by self-interest that reciprocity cannot come too soon. God blessed both lands abundantly that they might give and take in the friendliest and most liberal exchange.

It upsets one's predigested agrarian notions to find coal and oats raised on the same farm. I saw one such farm which from a patch directly over the mine-shaft took oats in 1921 worth $300. While the farmers raise cereals their offspring raise aërials on the roof of the house or the ridgepole of the barn. The radio uprights are common as lightning-rods are elsewhere. There are nearly five hundred receiving-sets in and about Edmonton.

I visited the *Journal* office to see, and to share their broadcasting. The two masts on the *Journal's* roof

are conspicuous punctuation-marks of the city's sky-line. A 500-watt equipment—the northernmost of the continent—enables the talk or the tune to be heard as far as Winnipeg, Vancouver, or Oregon. A 2000-watt outfit under way will of course increase the distance enormously. During my visit a telegram reached a moving train three hundred miles distant.

The meaning of this radio service to the dweller in the northern wild can scarcely be too strongly put. The old surreptitious rural amusement of "listening in" on a party line is now legitimized. It gives one a thrill to think of the size of the invisible simultaneous audience. Said one chronic seeker after political office, as he listened: "What an equipment to win elections!" He spoke in full and feeling awareness of the formidable journeying "o'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent" to carry the appeal to a rural electorate face-to-face. The account of the journey of Satan in "Paradise Lost," when he "sinks or swims or wades or creeps or flies" through Milton's cosmogony to the spoliation of Eden offers a parallel to electioneering in Alberta in the bygoing days.

Think of telling a bedtime story through two thousand miles of ether to a baby Eskimo at Coronation Gulf, or giving a performance of "Carmen" and "Rigoletto" to whalers marooned in Beaufort Sea! The day will come when an Eskimo prima donna from Greenland's icy mountains will be singing hymns to an audience on India's coral strands. J. P. Henderson, a Dominion radio engineer at Fort McPherson, who has a very powerful receiving set, heard at Fort Providence the tidings of the Dempsey-Carpentier bruising-mill at Jersey City in 1921 from the trans-

mitter at San Francisco. Even Honolulu and the Philippine Islands (a quarter of the way around the earth) have been heard in the Mackenzie valley.

The value of the radio to the fur trade is many times the cost of this first sub-Arctic plant. Not long ago a trader who had sent his buyers afield with instructions to purchase at a certain fixed price found to his dismay when they got beyond his reach that the market was rapidly falling. Before word could get to the agents the home office had lost at least $300,000. This season, fur-buyers will carry through the snows their individual receiving outfits, and at stated times they will receive instructions as to prices. Of course there will be no chance to talk back. It should be a very satisfactory way of managing a sales-force.

When I had "spoken my piece" into the phonograph-horn, Mr. Rice, the enthusiastic English impresario, called into the horn "Hello, everybody!" to announce that the show was over. Then immediately he began to page Mr. Henderson, supposedly two thousand miles away, to tell him that I was coming to him presently via the Arctic Express and the Mackenzie River.

"Mr. Henderson! Mr. Henderson!" he called again and again, in his *basso cantante*. It seemed like giving a moose-call by night in a lonely, immeasurable forest. The cable which "the dumb sea-levels thrilled to hear," can never be half so stirring.

"Mr. Henderson!" the voice repeated, "I'm shifting over to C W."

This meant that Mr. Rice was changing from the spoken word to the key, and presently the message was spluttering and crackling under his fingers with blue flames on the keyboard. I wondered if it would find

within earshot the man for whom it was meant, the man who—having no transmitter—could not answer. Of the radio it may be said, as Thoreau said of truth, it takes one to speak and one to hear. Mr. Henderson, I afterwards learned, was in Ottawa at the time and did not get the message. Later, at Fort Good Hope I had the pleasure of meeting him. He said: "It is very difficult to have to work against daylight throughout the Arctic summer. In the winter the atmospheric is greatly reduced. The radiophone is affected even more than wireless. The instrument that carries two hundred miles by day might have a range of a thousand miles at night."

The Peace River country rejoices in the cheery hail from Edmonton. On this great tributary of the Mackenzie is a tract of rich farming country as long as the distance from New York to Chicago, wider than New Jersey between Philadelphia and Atlantic City. Fort Vermilion is three hundred miles from a railroad. There is one doctor there, and his next professional colleague is three hundred miles away. One man with thirteen children has had a doctor for five. Now this whole region can be entertained and taught, and one can imagine what it means to the people there.

Edmonton is the Athens of Alberta. The inhabitants are passionate readers. Mr. Hill (an enthusiast and an optimist) displays on a pillar of his public library the names and pictures of "our own authors," among whom Mrs. Emily Murphy ("Judge" Murphy) and Mrs. Nellie A. McClung deserve special mention. "Judge" Murphy is a wise, kind police magistrate, who would rather redeem than incarcerate. She has been head of Canada's "Women's Institute" with over 100,-

000 women in earnest at one time about the franchise, and always concerned in social welfare. She is deeply concerned to rid the land of the sinister traffic in opium and other habit-forming drugs which leak in alarmingly through Vancouver; and she has written a book called "The Black Candle" to stir the public conscience against the evil. Under the pen-name "Janey Canuck" she has given the public a series of sprightly narratives based on her active career in the Northwest. Mrs. McClung is a novelist of international repute, whose incisive personality has won for her a host of friends. She is a member of the Provincial Legislature and is a steadfast proponent of measures designed to better the lot of women and children.

Edmonton is long and strong on luncheon clubs. In a week the Canadian Club, with Premier Greenfield (a sturdy, wholesome farmer) and the Chief Justice present, listened to a talk on astronomy by Dr. Chant of Toronto; the Board of Trade heard a talk on the conservation of eyesight; the Rotarians and the Kiwanis Club had similar luncheon meetings. The Château Macdonald was alive with conventions and reunions. In all such gatherings men and women talk and think Canada.

I hobnobbed with a veteran Alberta agriculturist, one chosen by fellow farmers not only to sit in the Dominion Parliament in their behalf four years, but to represent them on a permanent committee at Ottawa since. He is also a crop agent of the Canadian Pacific.

"What are the big needs of the Canadian Northwest?" I asked.

"We need to have the Hudson Bay Railway fin-

ished," he answered carefully. "That will take our wheat by a direct route to Europe."

"What next?"

"Well, we are very anxious to secure freight reductions. First, on our raw products—such as wheat, flax, barley, oats; then on our livestock—fat cattle, and sheep south of Edmonton, along the 'South Line' of the C. P."

"And after that?"

"Tariff reduction and an abatement of customs duties."

"Anything else?"

"We must have friendly trading relations with the United States. The high tariff is a nuisance."

Then he unburdened himself freely: "We ought to be able to take a grass-fed 1200-pound steer down to your corn-belt and feed him—'finish' him, as we say. We'd give him to you in exchange for shoes and clothing. Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta stand for such reciprocity. Canada made a mistake in voting down the reciprocity proposals of 1911–1922 first put forward by Mr. Taft. The present Liberal government under Mackenzie King would have accepted them. Our prairies are so far from coal, water transportation, and the centers of population that they are not adapted to big manufacturing industries. We can raise steers more cheaply than you, up to the corn-feeding stage. You can manufacture more cheaply. We should do well to trade."

This man was a pioneer, in '82, from a fifteen-acre farm in the Orkneys. He has five hundred acres in Canada, with fifty head of good short-horn cattle and thirty horses. He uses no tractors because he cannot

afford them. Having seen the Orkneys, I understood him when he said:

"I liked the pioneering freedom in Canada. Among the first settlers you find the community spirit. Tom Jones, we'll say, has a seed-drill. I have a broadcasting machine. I go to Tom and I ask him to lend me his drill. 'Why certainly, Jack.' Later he comes to me and wants to use my broadcasting machine. 'Of course, Tom.' This spirit is not found in the older settlements.

"It is important to note the growth and influence of the Grain Growers' movement. The 'locals' all through the Province have their annual convention. The interprovincial body is the Canadian Council of Agriculture."

I asked him to tell me how he began as a farmer.

"I started a hundred miles from the railway. When I drove in across the prairie I cooked my fat pork and bannocks on the way, melted snow to make tea, and thawed out my bacon. I didn't mind the cold. I have all my fingers and toes. Like my neighbors, I have measurably prospered. Last year there were rains and rust. There were high freight rates and a high cost of living in general. Reciprocity would double the population. Now we must bring goods over the long haul from the East, and the railway gets the rates.

"Protectionists in the eastern end of Canada say 'No trucking with the Yankees.' But the Yankees are human beings. I let one marry my daughter. The tariff wall means huge investments for factories in both countries. Of course, at Ottawa the representatives of the eastern sections do not see eye to eye, nor talk the same tongue with us farmers of the West. It's agriculture in western versus manufactures in eastern Canada.

But the East has her agriculture, too. Think how it injures New Brunswick and Boston alike, that when New Brunswick has an exportable surplus of potatoes she is cut off, by the tariff wall, from Massachusetts."

This weather-beaten husbandman was a democrat through and through—as democratic as a Greek in a vineyard of Corinth.

"The only question we ask about a fellow is, 'Is he a man?' Generally we don't ask him. He has to prove that he is. As a rule, we're on the land about the first week in April." (He said "on the land" with a curiously hearty, buoyant fervor, and he pronounced April as Chaucer would have given it—"Aprile.") "We stay on the land up to the first week of November. We do have blizzards sometimes that a man would be foolish to put his face against them. But (with a smile) we know enough not to do that.

"Harvest hands, brought to Alberta at low railway rates, must work thirty days. Last fall as high as $7 a day was paid. The wages used to be from $3 to $5 a day. The hired man eats with the family. The daughters of the family wait on him at table. We give him the best of food. If you want to get the most out of a locomotive, you've got to feed it the best steam coal and water. The same rule holds good of hired men. The married man has house and firewood, cow, chickens, and potatoes. Many farmers prefer the married to the single man because he stays put. Home brew is raising the mischief with men on the farms."

My friend the philosophic farmer, it has been seen, put first in the list of western Canada's needs the completion of the railway to Port Nelson on Hudson Bay, to release the wheat to Europe. He represents

the attitude of the farm bloc at Ottawa. Another phase of the matter was vigorously put by a river captain, who for sixteen years took a ship annually into Hudson Bay through the Straits and made the circuit of the Bay. "My boat was 2600 tons," he said, "carrying 1000 tons of bunker coal. Her plates were three-inch steel. It would need a boat of 12,000 tons to carry enough grain to pay. My boat, with supplies for the Port Nelson terminal and other points, carrying nothing away, was not held to a schedule. A grain-boat would have to leave on time. The Straits open to navigation about August 1st, and remain open to the end of October at the latest. There are fogs and field ice. On the finest days the warmth of the sun striking the cold water produces vapor: one cannot be sure of clear days until September. The ice is not like that of lake or river: it is the polar ice, from a foot to fifty feet thick, and the floes may be four miles across. It is brought down by the cold current through Fox Channel. This current sweeps along the shores of the Bay. Though there are trees and vegetation, the frost reaches to a depth of fifty-seven feet below the surface, and when we dug graves at Port Nelson we had to blast after we got to eighteen inches.

"The Government shut down work on the Port Nelson terminal in 1917. The high-water mark in the work there was reached in 1916, when there were 2500 men employed, and there were twenty-five miles of narrow-gage railway in the yards. Now the personnel is reduced to half a dozen watchmen. There is a dredge that cost $350,000 to build. There are other dredges and scows on the beach. There is a fully equipped machine shop.

"What may happen is illustrated by our experience with a 3000-ton ship in the mouth of the Nelson. She broke two of her propeller blades—not opposite but adjacent; and then the other two snapped, eight inches and four inches from the boss [the hub]. We pumped out the water ballast from the stern and shifted the cargo forward until the stern was high out of the water and the deck forward was under the waves just as if she was going down by the head. Then we unshipped the broken propeller and put in the spare one we carried. If a wind had come up, it would have been good night.

"The country back of Port Nelson is muskeg [peat bog], and pretty rotten muskeg it is. Some day, maybe, they'll drain it and raise wheat there. I'm not prophesying about the future. I simply want to point out that moving a big grain-ship on schedule time is a very different matter from carrying a cargo of furs worth hundreds of thousands of dollars in a small space with no time-limit on the movements of the boat."

The best traditions of journalism in Canada are exemplified in Frank Oliver of Edmonton, editor of the *Bulletin*. What he does not know of the pioneer days is hardly worth knowing. A former Minister of the Interior, he is learned in politics and policies, but in place of vanity is dignity, in place of selfish aim is a desire to serve: the sage is a quiet, modest, affable, amiable Christian gentleman. You should have his story at his lips of his voyage from the Mackenzie by way of the Peel and the Porcupine to the Yukon. He makes it sound as free from hazard as croquet on a lawn. The lore of agriculture and temperature, and natural resources, and reasonable prospects, flows from

his lips as from an oracle: yet he is not one of those who led James Monroe Buckley to say, "It is a dangerous thing for a man to start his mouth going and then go off and leave it." With the final authority of one who knows he tells you what you want to know. I was grateful to that grand old man of Canada, Colonel George H. Ham, of the Canadian Pacific, for numberless favors: one of the greatest services he did me was to assure this contact with Frank Oliver.

Another of the names of the old-timers held in high regard is that of ex-Mayor John McDougall. On a silver chest presented by his fellow townsmen there is at one end an engraving of the ox-cart in which he came to the Hudson's Bay Company huts that were Edmonton in 1876. At the other end is one of the trolley-cars he started running through the streets in his administration. The span of this man's career, from the ox-cart to electric power, epitomizes the history of Edmonton.

CHAPTER II

THE ARCTIC EXPRESS

OUTSIDE Alaska, the farthest north reached by any railway in the Western Hemisphere is attained by the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway when it comes to Waterways on the banks of the Clearwater River. The Clearwater runs into the Athabasca, the Athabasca leads to the Slave, and the Slave to the Mackenzie. It is the northernmost railway of all that join any other system. There is one through train a week from a station on the outskirts of Edmonton, where the tracks connect with the rails of the Canadian National.

Our set time to leave was nine-thirty, on Monday morning, June 19th. We got away at about eleven. The train behind the stalwart locomotive consisted of some twenty freight cars, an express and baggage car, a sleeper, part of which was convertible into a dining-car when the midmost passengers surrendered their berths, an out-and-out Pullman sleeper, and a caboose for the train-crew which was like a camp hut on wheels. I wanted to ride on the roof of the last, as in Finland, but the conductor seemed to prefer that I shouldn't, so I didn't.

It is easy to poke fun at any new railroad in a wilderness; but jibes at the expense of such a line as this are shafts misdirected. Kipling, in his unforgettable way, describes the travelers passing "pleasantly sleeping and

unaware" over the places where the Sons of Martha spilt their blood to make a thoroughfare; and it was so with us. The length of this line is almost precisely three hundred miles. In those three hundred miles at present there is but one place that counts for more than a water-tank or a section-house. That place is Lac La Biche, one hundred and twenty-eight miles from Edmonton. On the time-table "Water Tank" appears as a station-name seven times. Two consecutive flag stations are "Chaplin" and "Pickford." These names are about to be changed. I hope they will not change them to William S. Hart and Dorothy Dalton. The line of film favorites who would like to appear in the next edition of the time-table forms at the right. (I am not joking about the men who planted the ties and the rails, or the men who keep the trains running. A time-table is always a legitimate source of impersonal amusement.)

The track is laid across the muskeg and ballasted with sand, a good deal of which is steam-shoveled to flat cars from a quarry about thirty miles from the end of the line, and tamped by Polish and other laborers. In the last few months, the roadbed has been vastly bettered. The rails, last year, had a habit of sagging and spreading into the bog, and cars were often derailed. Nowadays there are many trips without an accident. The train the week before ours had three cars derailed; we came through on the present occasion without an upset. Our time should have been twenty-nine hours—an average of a little above ten miles an hour. We took thirty-four hours, an average of not quite nine miles an hour. That was not ludicrous, but almost miraculous. Think what the rail

trip saved! Aforetime, you needed a week to go from Athabasca Landing downstream, through and around the rapids, to McMurray, after you had spent days on the wagon-road that took you a hundred miles from Edmonton to the Landing. It required four weeks to track (tow) the boats upstream. The river distance is 238 miles.

A "gasoline speeder" put on in emergencies can beat the train to and fro by a day, its inconsiderable weight enabling it to pass over the unstable roadbed without risk at from twenty to thirty miles an hour.

It was a very sociable train. Before long everybody knew everybody else's business. The inquisitiveness was never unpleasant. It was born not merely of curiosity but of kindly human interest, and the desire for comradeship natural to people few in number in far places.

In the seat ahead of me was the saintly Bishop Grouard, an apostolic and a heroic figure revered by saint and sinner, Papist and Protestant, red man and white man, throughout the Northwest. At least two lakes and a village bear his name. With his white hair and beard and the purple sash across the cassock he was a figure that might have stepped from a Roman conclave to the reindeer moss. And he had done so, more than once. Leo XIII appointed him, and to Pius X he reported.

"Pope Pius," the good Bishop told me, "laughed and stretched forth his hand and stroked my beard. When I found him so human and so kind I broke out in Latin, since the Holy Father knew French but imperfectly: *'O quam bonus Pater tu es!'* ('O what a good father thou art!')"

Everybody who saw him wanted to do something for him to win his smile and his words of gratitude. His "Well, well, my dear sir!" was as good as a benediction. One youngster of but seventy-eight sitting across the aisle brought a brush—it was his own idea—and fixed the patriarch's beard and hair to the latter's beaming satisfaction. He was as amiable and as affectionate as a dear old dog who lets anybody play with him. Yet none was tempted to liberties. There was a power of quiet dignity in the old man—with the power of a selfless, consecrated lifetime in his benign aspect.

He is eighty-two years old, and has been giving his life to his people of the woods and streams and snows for sixty years. He is still in active service. He is somewhat deaf, but he wears no glasses; his mind is as bright as his eye, and his sense of humor is as lively as his conscience.

He made no boast of anything, and it was not easy to elicit any story of his own deeds. In talking of others, and of his Church, he waxed eloquent. He showed me an illustrated prayer-book in the Cree Indian tongue.

"I brought the first press to Chipewyan," he said. "I set up the type with my own hand, and printed three thousand copies of a prayer-book in Cree, like this one. I also prepared and printed a summary of the Old Testament stories and of the Life of Christ. The Cree language and the Chipewyan are as different as night is from day. Cree and Dog-Rib are dialects which have points of similarity. The priest must first of all learn to speak the tongue of those among whom he comes. That is what they told me when I first went

out from Winnipeg, sixty years ago. We have some lay readers, among the Indians, but no priest of their people has ever been ordained. Their ways are not as our ways, and they are ever on the move."

Bishop Grouard made the altar-paintings in his Chipewyan church. They are on moosehide and deerskin, in default of canvas. The central scene is that of the Crucifixion; the side panels portray Moses with the tablets of the Law and Peter with the keys of Heaven.

There were two honeymoon couples, to add osculation to oscillation as the train creaked and tottered along. There was also a bride-to-be, who was going from Sheffield, England, to Fort Norman to be married to a childhood playmate. The mosquitoes and the bulldog flies pastured upon her roseleaf English complexion, but took no toll from her dauntless spirit. A botanical expert from the University of Pennsylvania, Roland Holroyd, filled his hands at every water-tank with fresh mysteries of the family of the Compositæ, which for numbers and distribution seems to be the Smith family of the vegetable creation. Nothing was too primitive for this acquisitive soul, and he proposed sitting on the roof of the caboose even before I did.

A New York trained nurse, bright angel of a Peace River community thirty-five miles from a doctor, came along—on crutches—for a vacation. She served in France in war-time. Where she now gives her life, if a cow swallows binder-twine they come to ask her how much salts to give.

Further to call the roll of our dewberry or muskegberry if not Canterbury pilgrims, we had with us a bank manager, who extended the right hand of greet-

ing and in the same breath offered to cash a check for me, as if it were his customary mode of salutation. There should be named, *honoris causa,* a representative of the Dominion Cartridge Company, F. H. Morris, who in 1908 at Bisley with the rifle won the deliberate-fire championship of the British Empire, and in 1911 captured the rapid-fire championship. Kitchener, who awarded the prize and praised him for coming so far to compete, roared with laughter when the sturdy young Canadian strove to walk off with the trophy weighing three hundred pounds.

No "Arctic Express" would be complete without a "mountie" going on some long-distance errand, and we had an M. P. who was taking home an Indian who had been crazy a while and was now supposed to be quite cured. The Indian gentleman was grimly silent and inaccessible to interviews. At any rate, he uttered no blood-curdling yell, he wielded no tomahawk, he broke no window in a wild dash for freedom. These things and more he would have been sure to do in fiction or the film. Otherwise, how could there be a story?

On no account should one leave out the engineer and the fireman. At meal-times they gave the tired engine a rest and ate with us in the dining car. You cannot very well hold apple pie in one hand and a throttle or a shovel in the other. When one came to shake hands at the end of the run with these old friends, one found that the engineer had been on duty consecutively for twenty-four of the thirty-four hours. The seven-hour Adamson law would have been as foreign a tongue to him as Cree or Dog-Rib to the likes of you and me. He was there to take his engine to the end of the run,

and he did. The strain, he modestly explained, was no slight matter. To look along the rippling track confirmed him. The labor gangs we saw in box-cars at three places did their best, but any man of science in a locomotive cab knows well that it is no mean feat to take a full-length, full-weight Pullman sleeper with a string of freight-cars over railways sometimes resembling the "waterways" of the euphonious and significant name of the line and its river-side terminus.

You could, therefore, easily forgive him when he unhitched the iron horse and went shopping for water up the track ahead of us; or put on brakes to wait for steam. In the three hundred miles there was only Nature to dispute the right of way with us, but Nature has her own formidable set of block-signals. Water and mud may be as troublesome as ice or snow or rocks, and quicksands are no place for quick time. Now and then when we struck a grade the time-saving way was for the locomotive to haul our freight halfway up the slope to a siding and then come back for the passenger part of the long caravan.

But there was plenty to say, to read, to hear, to eat, to see. The blithe one of seventy-eight who had brushed Bishop Grouard's hair came and sat opposite me, and recited whole scenes from Hamlet. He hailed from Sharon, Pennsylvania. I would have trusted him to put on the play all by himself: he was the most convincing Ophelia I have ever heard—much better than the King was as Juliet in "Huckleberry Finn."

In the old days, a wandering thespian named Sullivan went from Pennsylvania town to town attaching himself for one-night stands to local stock-companies. One night at Lancaster he played Hamlet. The player who

took the part of Hamlet's uncle was atrocious. Apropos of nothing he beckoned mysteriously to the Prince of Denmark in the midst of a big scene. Hamlet reluctantly dragged his toes over to him, wondering. Then the local ranter stooped and whispered, "I don't know another damned line." Ere the astonished Hamlet could answer, the King straightened up and said in a loud voice, "That which I have imparted unto thee, Hamlet, see thou remember!" Then he and his royal vestments trailed off the stage, leaving Hamlet to carry on with the scene as best he could.

Had our friend of the "Arctic Express" been filling Hamlet's galligaskins, he would not have been perturbed. He would have gone right on with the uncle, the queen, Polonius, Ophelia, and all the rest, never turning a hair or missing a single mouthful of the lines.

What was a wait of an hour or so, in such pleasant company? In Transcaucasia I have waited three days and a half between trains at a junction-point, and the conveyance was not a Pullman but a box-car, with a tank of oil beside me. The Alberta and Great Waterways, by contrast, supplied enervating luxury to its patrons. If the rates seemed high—$18.25 for the 296 miles—let that one tiny hamlet on the way be remembered. The passenger pays but a small part of the cost of operation.

This halfway point, where the train sojourned two hours and a half, deserves more than passing mention. Lac La Biche was burned off the map twice, two and four years ago, by a forest fire, and put back on again by the pluck of its people befriended by the railway. The accumulation of board shacks, board walks, kindly

citizens, amiable dogs and goats (I carried a young one in my arms up and down the main street) is on the shore of a beautiful but tempestuous lake, now defended as a bird reserve and therefore barred to the huntsman. The feature of the place is a fine hotel, built partly of pebbles and partly of timber, now tenanted only by a caretaker's family. It is on the lake shore, and there is a tiny dock which no boat touches. The building has stood thus for five years without a guest. We made the circuit of the building ere we found signs of life in it at open windows. A cheery feminine voice asked us in. We found all as animated and bright within as though the hotel were open for business. The family dined in the kitchen. Father was not at home, but mother, two matronly friends with their knitting, and two sweet little girls with two small white kittens did their best to make us feel at home. They took us from room to deserted room. I could say with Tom Moore:

> "I feel like one
> Who treads alone
> Some banquet-hall deserted."

There was the registry desk with a frame of numbers above it for the never-sounding call-bells of the invisible guests; there were the printed rules; one could imagine a bland boniface behind the desk handing a pen to an arrival, assigning a room, calling "Front!" and handing the key to the bellboy. Instead was a ghostly silentness. Downstairs, in the basement, was a poolroom with the finest of slate-and-baize tables awaiting players who never came. We went into a bedroom completely furnished with everything but an

occupant. We sat in a sun-parlor with the fronds of artificial palms over our heads, and the little girls, whitely dressed as if for a tea-party, prattled about the school they had with a teacher who came on extended visits from Edmonton. They took us into a parlor where there were two desks for their schoolroom, with a teacher's desk, and when I rang the handbell, called the school to order, and sent to the blackboard a fellow passenger from the train, who entered into the spirit of the game, the little ones roared with laughter as at the merriest of pastimes. As I told them stories, I had a lump in my throat to think how cut off they were from the joys of a normal childhood. But this was nothing to the isolation I was later to see in places farther north.

Farewells were said with mutual reluctance. The train creaked and panted on, all through the night, and till the bright evening the next day. Nothing was more striking in the landscape than the white magic of the birches along the track, sometimes for miles together. One looked into a limitless fairyland of thin serried white trunks, and sometimes in the depths one saw an evergreen that was as if they had taken it prisoner. In more than one place a mighty wind had made an extraordinary spectacle among these birches: it had bowed them over like croquet-hoops, so that one looked through the innumerable semicircles as one might behold some curious freak of the luxuriance of tropic vegetation, in a forest of Amazonia or Java.

The "end of steel" came at Waterways, a log village too new for paint, with steel rails for a station platform. Thence we walked through enchanted woods to the steamer, the *Athabasca River,* half a mile away.

The main street, parallel with the tracks, rejoices in the name "Princess Mary Street." Some of the streets are houseless, stump-filled cleavages amid the spruces. All of the three or four built-on thoroughfares have only stumps for paving-stones. The shacks are all of logs. Reindeer moss, that should have been mixed with mud, is in the crevices. On one of these shacks is a sign: "Boohunk Villa. Two Bits a Flop."

The life of the place is a Mrs. Fowler, who runs a store where ice-cream may be had. This refectory has cretonne curtains, two tables with a fern in a pot on each, blue tissue-paper around the pot. There were wild roses in a pitcher on the counter. Her husband cleared the space and put up the house. Her neat white dress she made out of flour-sacks.

Some men and three of the women had gone from Waterways to look for gold, nine miles west of the 266th mile of the railway, at a pond where an Indian had panned gold from the lake-water, and somebody else got seventeen grains from a pan. It takes little to start a stampede or a boom hereabouts.

"If I had a husband I couldn't get on with," Mrs. Fowler told any who cared to listen, "I'd say, 'There's the door!' "

She sent a boy to the station for the three watermelons the train brought. She found this man's preferred brand of plug tobacco, set out a bottle of Edmonton ginger ale for another, and sold a pack of playing-cards to a third.

"Certainly we like it here. Too busy to be lonesome. There's something doing all the time, and I hardly have a minute to myself the livelong day."

She shooed away a snooping dog, set out a chair for

Accidents Will Happen

The *Distributor*

A Woodpile

the steamer-captain, found glasses of cold water for tenderfeet in his wake, handed out sticks of lemon candy from a glass jar to a youngster. She laughed at the captain's sally when he said to a customer: "What? You going down to Fort Norman to marry Mr. X? Why don't you commit suicide right here and save the fare?"

The woman was a type of those of the North by whom the cultural level where they live rises or falls. One met so many of them, on whom the goodness of a place depended. It meant so much that they should carry on, in fealty to the ideals of the old country, recognizing the rubric and the ritual of hospitality in the new. Morale depended on them, and they had a unique chance to win the community's respect, confidence, and even devotion.

Blithe, brisk, outspoken, but essentially refined was this good lady. She would laugh and joke with all-comers—a ready quip at the end of her tongue: but woe be to any one who misunderstood and took advantage. Her friends would be as ready as she to resent it.

The daughters of the hotel-keeper had a lemonade-stand behind the hostelry. Lemonade was ten cents a glass.

"It's better here than at McMurray," said the younger, a Robin Hood figure in a boy's costume of khaki. "Because here you can see the train once a week. Whenever it comes in, father's hotel is full up."

She was fondling a black and white husky dog as she spoke.

"I got too friendly with our dogs, and then when I wanted to harness them for winter they wouldn't obey.

They thought it was a joke. But I couldn't bear to beat them." Here the dogs were fairly sleek and friendly. They lived in a region with plenty to eat.

As I walked through the woods to the steamer with rabbits and chipmunks frisking about, one of the passengers on the train came up to me. "My son is to be married at Macpherson when the boat gets there. I got to make a speech at the wedding. What would you say in my place?"

"Well," I answered, "you might try something like this. 'Dear friends, you may be sure that this is a day of great happiness for me. I am not losing a son, but gaining a daughter, who shall be to me as a member of my own family.' "

"Wait a minute," he said. "Don't go too fast. That's the stuff. But how can I remember it?"

"You don't have to remember it," I said. "Just get the spirit of it. Talk in a conversational, natural way. Talk to 'em like a human being. Don't try to make a speech."

"Well, go on."

" 'My son and I have always been great pals,' " I continued.

"That's right!" said my friend. "That's the truth. How did you know it?"

" 'And so,' " I went on, " 'we have always shared everything. Now that this great joy has come to him to bless his life, it is mine as well.' "

"If I could only remember that!" the fond father exclaimed ruefully.

"Don't try to commit anything to memory," I advised him. "You'll only forget it!"

He sighed. "It'll be awful standing out there in

the middle of the floor with all those people looking on. The H. B. agent and the Justice of the Peace are coming, and the Bishop and everybody else. You'll be with us, too, won't you? We'll certainly be glad to have you."

"Of course I'll be there. Don't get nervous. They'll all look at the bride, not at you." He seemed relieved at that.

A spur of the railway meandered through the woods and brought freight to the Clearwater embankment, seven miles above the confluence with the Athabasca at McMurray. The Hudson's Bay boat *Athabasca River* nosed the bank. The boat is new: this was her second trip. She takes passengers as far as the Fitzgerald portage, several days downstream, where the change is made for Fort Smith.

We waited for two days while the loading was completed. The boat was a stern-wheel steamer one hundred and fifty-five feet long, thirty-eight-foot beam, with a paddle wheel—much like a Ferris wheel—nineteen feet across. It drew three feet with an average load. The boiler (taken from a dismantled boat at Prince Rupert) was covered with asbestos and flour, and the fire-box had an insatiable appetite for four-foot spruce logs collected and chucked in by a crew of college boys and a few "breeds," as the half-breeds are called. In the hold round the boiler and engines was a cargo containing everything the traders and their families could wish for.

There were lard, soap, tea, sugar, evaporated apples, condensed milk, shingles, canned salmon, syrup, flour, seedless raisins, tobacco, and mosquitoes. There were ranges and oranges, iron bedsteads, hams, passengers,

sewing-machines, coffee, bacon, and mosquitoes. There were paraffin candles, pilot bread, baking powder, corned beef, fresh beef, traps and chains for the traps, oatmeal, drygoods, candy, prunes, and mosquitoes. Spruce canoes made in Edmonton cluttered the upper deck. Talk of carrying coals to Newcastle, or hams to Smithfield!

There is a discrepancy in weight and bulk between outgoing and incoming cargoes. What goes out as a bag of flour weighing forty-nine or ninety-eight pounds may come back a marten skin weighing a few ounces. The returning cargo of furs may be worth a million dollars. Last year it came to $750,000.

At our first stop we took on eight horses for the Fitzgerald portage. Further research discovered linoleum, files, needles and thread, olives, cigarettes, mustard pickles, honey, catsup. One was reminded of the good Quaker at the freight terminal who saw a box labeled "Tom Cats."

He went to the freight clerk and remonstrated. "That's a heathen, an inhuman way to ship animals!"

"Don't get excited," responded the clerk. "That's only our abbreviation for Tomato Catsup."

There were motor-boats, with oil for them. There was sweet-scented hay. There were also mosquitoes.

Much of this assortment was piled on a 200-ton scow pushed by our boat's flat nose. If a scow is towed, it is liable to be dragged by the eccentric current on the shifting sand-bars.

There were five passengers—six when Bishop Grouard rejoined us at Fort McMurray, seven miles below. Our severely plain but entirely comfortable cabins opened into the long dining saloon with its smoking-

room curtained off. At a carpenter's bench in the forepart of the latter, work still continued on screens for the windows, and shelves and other "spare parts" for the boat.

If you wanted exercise midstream, all you had to do was to go down in the hold and manhandle those big spruce logs for the fire. Sometimes you had to "step lively" to dodge the pile as it came cascading down, and if you did not wear gloves you might run big splinters into your fingers.

The old times of inland river navigation in the States were revived. It might have been Mark Twain again on the Mississippi. When that monstrous paddle-wheel at the end of two days stirred from sleep, it seemed like a giant walking on his hands along the bottom of the shallow stream.

The river is an open book to Captain E. B. Haight. But it is not a book that can be read once for all and put away. The text of current and shoal alters daily—even hourly. Captain Haight in '84 took twenty-one Athabascan Indians out to Egypt to work the boats up the rapids to the relief of "Chinese" Gordon. They got to a point a hundred and twenty miles from the beleaguered city when the word came of the martyrdom at Khartoum. They found it harder going even than the fifteen famous rapids between Athabasca Landing and McMurray. Once, on the Athabasca, with his collar-bone broken, Captain Haight filled his pipe with his toes. Besides his medal for Egypt, he carries a medal for thirty years' service (now lengthened to thirty-eight) with the Hudson's Bay Company. (The Scotch engineer, John Sutherland, has served forty years.) The Captain in the days of old brought

boats from Lake Winnipeg to Edmonton with one portage—a traffic that since the railway does not pay. He went through the Red River Rebellion, and talks Cree like a native. He was a real captain, on the job every minute.

While we were tied to the muddy bank at the edge of the woods, stewing in our own juice, we had our full share of the mosquitoes. Captain Back in 1833 said that sandflies (the big bulldog flies, as big as a bumblebee) and mosquitoes are the worst hardships in the North. Ernest Thompson Seton gives them a denunciatory chapter in his "The Arctic Prairies." He didn't take "dope" for them, and lived to regret it. Alexander Mackenzie, discoverer of the river, wrote under date of June 19, 1789, that he was "pestered by mosquitoes, though in a great measure surrounded by ice."

As Jim in "Huckleberry Finn" says of the rats, "I hain' got no use f'r um, skasely." About the only good thing one can say of them is that there are not so many in some places as in others. Let it always be borne in mind that, as at Panama, they are not an ultimatum, but an incident. For years the female of the species of the anopheles with the malaria and the stegomyia "peddling" yellow-fever germs held up the construction of the Isthmian waterway. Along came Dr. Gorgas to petrolize the pools and clear away the brush—and presto! Change. The quinine bottle on the table with each meal was no longer a necessary tipple, and the miles of screens about the houses became a superfluity. So will it be one day in the Mackenzie region. Furthermore, this mosquito is of the harmless culex variety, so well known in New Jersey and elsewhere. She carries no gift of germs. She generally

sings clear notice of her coming, and is easy to kill, if she wouldn't call so often.

The familiar preparation known as lollacapop seems to be the best discourager. With a screened cabin window, after I had conducted a systematic massacre, I went to bed with smeared face and hands and slept well. In addition, I carried mosquito helmets—one with wire gauze, used by Henry G. Bryant in Labrador, and two of cheesecloth with chiffon across the face opening.

The bulldog fly often butted his head once against a screen and caromed away—or else he preferred to sizzle in a window-corner, or torture horses and dogs. But hope of human blood sprang eternal in the striped breast of the mosquito: time hung on her crooked hands, and she hung on the screen with the patience of an explorer. In fact, she has in her the blood of generations of explorers. The mosquitoes set us an example in patience. They seemed more willing to wait than we were.

When the boat was under way and the fresh breeze blew as we proceeded downstream, with a phonograph doing "The End of a Perfect Day" in waltz-time, one gave no more thought to the mosquitoes. It must be conceded that in damp woods and at a muddy, bushy stream-bank they are an unmitigated nuisance. It is a poor spirit, however, that is held back from such a journey as this by an insect so contemptible.

At last the scow had her full load, safely tucked away under canvas, and we gave a blast of the whistle and started downstream. That start was worth witnessing. We backed out till the paddle churned the mud furiously against the further bank. It is a common

"stunt" to wear away a sand-bar in that fashion when the need arises. The scow did not start with us—the "gas-boat" was to tow it after us to the first stop at Fort McMurray.

Two "breeds" stood at the prow with long red-and-green banded poles, constantly dipping and reporting on the depth to Captain Haight in the pilot house. We were drawing three feet.

"Five!"

"Five and a half!"

"Four and a half!"

"Four."

"No bottom." This meant we were in the channel.

"The rain gave us two inches," said the Captain thankfully. After all, if a boat drawing three feet six inches goes down with all hands in four feet of water it does not go very far. Instead of "All hands to save ship!" one might expect the order to come from the bridge, "All feet to put on rubbers!"

Said the engineer, John Sutherland, who took the first steamer down the Mackenzie in '87, and who knew Kipling's "McAndrew's Hymn": "We bumped a little, comin' up. The rain'll help. She's pretty thin. Where she's shoalest it's about three feet six. The channel's entirely different from two years ago."

With the current, we could make thirteen knots, loaded, when we tried. The Clearwater runs a mile and a half an hour, the Athabasca two miles an hour. What Uncle Remus would call "medjun en markin'" on the way downstream is an anxious and necessary business. A wide, muddy stream is not by any means a deep one. The brown water hides many a treacherous stranding-place, and none is near to help the

At Fort McMurray

On the Clearwater

shipmaster whose craft gets stuck. The everlasting prodding with the painted pole for the soundings is exhausting work for the men forward.

With the Clearwater at its widest, it was surprising when the boat nosed into the narrowest of straits behind an island. The trees had been cut away to let her through. When we came out again, the place of exit disappeared into the shrubbery behind us as if it had never been.

"Only two feet deep out there in the main stream," observed the water-wise carpenter, as he sawed off another length of Oregon cedar to trim a shelf.

At a tiny settlement of boat-builders called Prairie we took a ton and a half of wood (four cords) from the pile on the bank. The boat sidled as near as it could. The long gangplank was run out. Men jabbering Cree climbed the overhanging bank, twenty-five feet above the water, by clinging to alders at the edge, and hauled up the gangplank, using it as a chute for the logs.

At Fort McMurray, a mile below, we tied up for the night, to load horses in the morning, and went ashore that Mr. Morris might give an exhibition of rifles and ammunition in behalf of the company he represented. We carried through the main street the rifles and a sackful of blocks of wood and tin cans to shoot at. To these at a store we added a cake of soap, two cans of corn, and some half-frozen potatoes.

"If you don't hit 'em," cried the sporting storekeeper after us, "you'll have to pay for 'em. If you do hit 'em, I won't charge you nothing."

But we did not have to pay anything.

Soon word was all over the one-street village that

the shoot would be at eight o'clock. Whites, Indians, and half-breeds assembled, their dogs with them, at the Hudson's Bay tract on the banks of the Athabasca, near its confluence with the stream by which we came.

It was a strange assortment that hung their chins over the half-wood, half-barbed-wire fence, or sat on a big anthill on the bank. Mr. Morris's free show entertained them vastly. I stood by a French Canadian, seventy years of age, who did not look or talk more than fifty. He lived a hundred miles away in the bush, and had not seen a town larger than McMurray since he came there fifty-three years ago. He is father of fourteen children, most of whom are dead. Only one, "the baby," remains with the father and the mother, who has had no doctor's help in all these years. "If we get sick, we mus' jus' do de bes' we can."

No, he wouldn't live anywhere else for worlds. He loves the freedom and hates the crowds. "When there are so many people it must be ver' unhealthy."

Mr. Morris threw the cans of corn and the potatoes into the air and blew them into bits so small that the roving dogs, hungry as they were, could not find them. He shot cartridges off the ends of the plucky English girl's fingers.

"I like best to shoot a grapefruit," he admitted. "When you hit it there's absolutely nothing left."

The Indians jabbered at the fence-rail, and the French Canadian, perfect in three Indian languages, translated. "They say, 'Look, he hit 'im twice!' They say it's ver' fine, ver' fine. They don't see the pieces chipped off the wooden blocks, but they hear the ping of the bullets on the tin cans, and that sat'sfies 'em.

But they want to know why he don't kill some of those little birds flying around. Why?"

I asked Mr. Morris, and his answer illustrated the difference between an Indian's sporting ideals—or the lack of them—and ours.

"I don't care to shoot those harmless swallows," said Mr. Morris. "What's the use? It'd just be massacre. Once I shot a crane—a useful bird, that removes pests from a farmer's fields. When I shot it, its mate rose up and circled about over the spot for a long time with wild cries that must have been mourning for its mate. I felt dirt mean. I'd kill a crow, or a loon, because the loon robs the streams after they have been stocked with fish. But I've sworn off on the birds that do no harm and only help."

The guns used—six in number—included Marlin 22's and 30-30's, 32 specials, and a 12-gage shot-gun. After the thrown targets, he fired with the 30-30 at a white stone at the water's edge across the Athabasca, about four hundred yards away, and splashed the water directly in front of it.

Among the most conspicuous sights in Fort McMurray are its cows—which prove that the dogs are fed and comparatively gentle—the dogs, the Indian babies, and a pole in the midddle of the street with a painted wooden watch atop of it, as the sign of—astonishing as it may seem—a jewelry store. The ruling spirit of the place—or perhaps dividing the honor with the fire-ranging justice of the peace and his wife—is Mrs. Sutherland at the Hudson's Bay Post. Like Coventry Patmore's lover in "The Angel in the House," she wears her commendation in her face, rosy with goodness, benevolence, Christian charity, and hospitality to

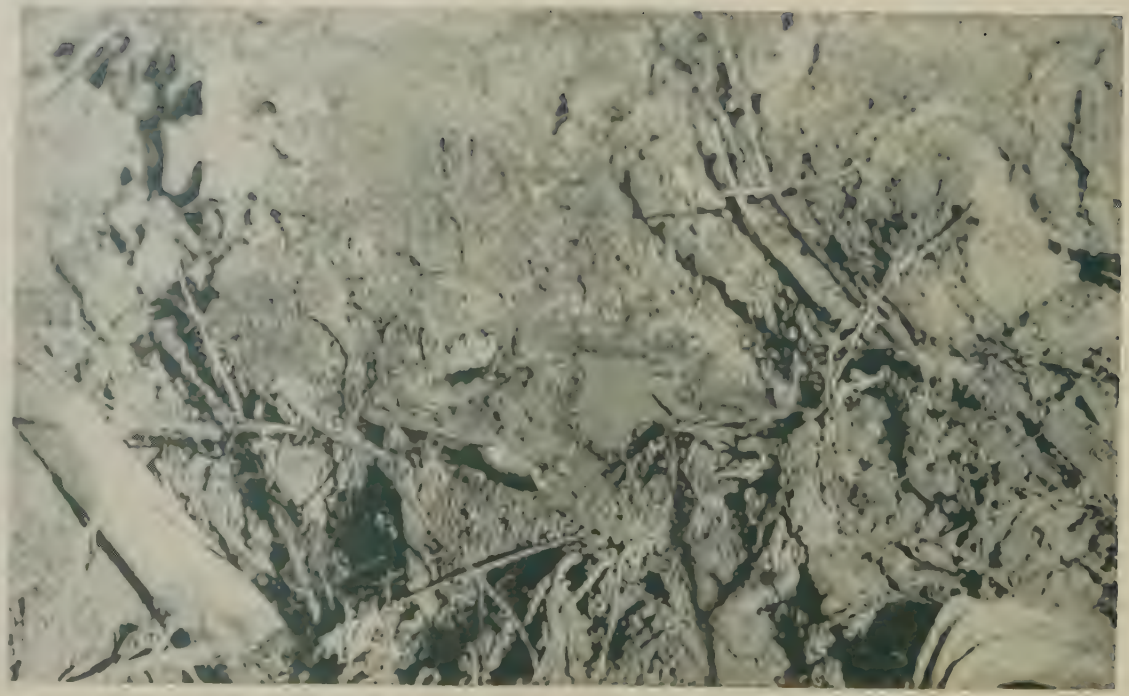
all comers. She dotes on people, and her living room and kitchen, for all the work, can never be too full of them. On the way to her house we met the good Bishop Grouard returning to our boat. We stopped and shook hands and held parley with him. He was accompanied by the Catholic priest, a Doctor of Divinity, and at least a dozen Indians who thought it an honor to carry his suitcase.

Next morning the dogs were lined up on the stringpiece of the small floating wharf, wistful, their ears interrogation points toward the cook's galley. A dribble of murky water fell from a small pipe into the stream amidships. There in the muddy current a mass of pickerel struggled as if they found calories and vitamines which it would take a fish to find. It looked as if there was as much kalsomine as vitamine.

The engineer rigged up a line with a nail for a sinker, and in a few minutes we had the satisfaction of hauling out about twenty pickerel, very bony, a foot long at least. These were flung one by one to the wildly interested huskies. Over the first few they quarreled vigorously, not conceding possession even when the tail of the fish was disappearing in the jowl of the fortunate dog. One husky grabbed a fish by the head end and seemed to swallow it at one long gulp.

The fact that several fish were finally allowed to lie untouched was a gratifying indication that the Fort McMurray dogs were pampered. Most were quite as tame as any dogs at home, and rubbed against you or sat contentedly on (not merely at) your foot most sociably. One beastie that clearly did not belong in the picture with the other rakish, wolfish creatures was a huge St. Bernard, who with mournful dignity con-

Tar Sands



Oil at Fort Norman

templated the rest tearing at the fish and took no part in their unseemly mêlée. He was particularly responsive when I crossed on the gangplank, rising like a great gentleman to greet me with an affable sincerity.

We swung out slowly from the "snye" into the main stream of the Athabasca. The "snye" is the cut-off between two streams at their junction, making an island of what would otherwise be a promontory. When water is high in the Athabasca, it "backs up" into the Clearwater. When it is high in the Clearwater, it "backs up" into the Athabasca. Below the convergence are the black "tar-sands" over strata of limestone. These tar-sands are at the present time the object of intensive research by Dr. S. C. Ells in behalf of the Dominion Government, and by Thomas Draper at Waterways. Dr. Ells, who was ten miles below Fort McMurray at the time of our visit, is making the most exhaustive contour map of the region that has ever been made, to indicate the location of the deposits. On June 22nd, two carloads of tar-sands left Waterways for experimental processes in plants in the United States and England, and later Mr. Draper sent other most promising and interesting specimens. Some old-timers are skeptical, from many failures in the past, and do not believe the oil can be extracted from the tar-sands (which hold it sometimes to as much as twenty-eight per cent), in order not merely to secure this valuable liquid but to obtain asphalt said to rival that of Trinidad. But the companies that are to undertake the experiments, like the Government investigator, appear to be sanguine, and if success crowns the effort here is another industry of the first importance for the Mackenzie district and for Canada. At

present, as is generally known, pavement of this material is doing excellent service in the streets of Edmonton.

Dropping down the river in the clear, breeze-winnowed sunlight, with the endless files of spruces and white birches throwing their green serrated shade over the edges of the brown stream, one learned philosophy of the carpenter, who fervently believed that the *Saturday Evening Post* is the best magazine on earth. The carpenter taught that you cannot hustle the North any more than you can hustle the East.

"Once," he remembered, "I got excited. It was a box I wanted at Peace River. After a long search it turned up at the storehouse. 'Why should you raise such a holler about your old box, Bill?' the agent said to me. 'It ain't only been here but just about six months."

Time in the North Country seems never to run out. Men and cities recede, taking their problems with them. The time-table is torn up at the end of steel when the map is unrolled.

> "A day less or more,
> At sea or ashore,
> We die—does it matter when?"

Here indeed are "only the mightier movements—life and death." The river speaks of the glory of God and the majesty of Nature. It has nothing to say of the fret and fever that compose too large a part of the life of cities set up by pigmy man.

Even at Fort McMurray there is a jail. But the jailer's wife gives every poor sinner a cup of tea before

he goes out to try again to be good among the evergreens or the snows.

I met "Bill" Loutit, the guide whom Seton commends in his book. Loutit was gently drunk, and I reproved him. "W'at a man goin' to do?" he sweetly leered at me. "S'posin' somebody come an' put a big bottle down on the table in front o' me. I no can say no."

"I wrote down your name in my notebook, Bill, because of what Mr. Seton said. You ought to live up to his praise of you."

"Mr. Seton is a nice man. I read his book. The pictures are not in his book the way they really are. He brings everything—so—close up to his tent. It is not really that way. He make believe it all happen right outside the tent. But I like to see him again. An' the other gentleman that was with him, Mr. Preble, mos' of all."

"Cut out the booze, Bill. It raises the devil with good men."

"I know. I seen it. But what can I do? They ain't nothin' else to do here at Fort McMurray. All a man can do is just drink."

Bishop Grouard, who is my candidate for beatification, says there is a lot of good in his dear Indians when you get through the surface to where God planted the soul. "Drink is one of the great evils with which we must contend. Gambling is another. They have a game in which you have to guess in which hand something is concealed as they chant to the drumbeat, monotonously. They are willing to play it all day and all night. At Chipewyan we have used the 'Marseillaise' as a setting for a hymn against drink. Their own tunes

are like this"—he imitated a sequence of uncouth Indian grunts—"to the beat of the drum. It is not music to our ears."

As for the evils of drink, of home brew and of drugs, I was told of the case of "Extract Mary," a girl at Chipewyan. She is about twenty-five years of age. She has an uncontrollable thirst for lemon extract—a common and a pernicious craving here. When she cannot get that she quaffs hair wash or red ink or a similar potion. She and her fellow "addicts" can be told from normal persons by their dullness and stupefaction. She is but one representative of a class whose numbers are formidable as their condition is deplorable.

Father Grouard has an inimitable French gift of pantomime. Had he not become a bishop, one can imagine him an actor. When I came to the upper deck after catching the pickerel and giving the shore dogs a breakfast he said to me as though in a towering passion: "What are you doing? You come and you deprive our streams of their fish, for the mere pleasure of slaying. Then you wantonly throw to the dogs what might be food for human beings!"

Completely taken aback, I began to explain. "But, Monsignor, these were pickerel, unfit for human consumption. They are too bony. I gave them to the dogs because the poor beasts looked so hungry. I had heard in my country how sadly neglected they are during the summer. I determined to feed them whenever I could. This seemed an excellent opportunity. I do not like to slay any living creature without reason. But I love dogs, and if they are now fed as they should be, they will be in far better condition to draw the sleds when winter comes."

That winsome smile of the Bishop's came out like the sun from clouds. Then he patted my shoulder, and the smile turned to outright laughter. "My dear sir, that is all right. I was only joking. Of course it is right to feed the dogs. Why, they are our horses! Many, many times have they taken me about in the snows where I must go on my journeys."

As we zigzagged through the shallows, one of our three rudders grounded and its shaft was bent. Another illustration of resourcefulness. The boat was shoved against the bank. A man clambered ashore, half like a monkey, half like a sloth, on an overhanging poplar, planks were run out, a forge with an anvil was carried ashore, and presently the men had stripped the iron-work from the rudder. They heated the shaft red-hot and hammered it straight, the red flame of their forge leaping high against the deep green of the wood. The job took three hours—a remarkable record. While they were at it, "Steamboat Roy" came aboard. This tawny brother to the wolf belongs to Aleck Linklater, the half-breed pilot who served us. Aleck is the "mayor" of Poplar Point, an Indian cluster a little way below Fort McKay, where we did not stop. The dog saw the boat pass, and clambered along the bank to rejoin his master when we ran out the planks to fix the rudder at the forge. The boat waited for him to come aboard when we started again. One of the crew brought on a starved Indian dog to a soft berth in the hay between the horses.

"I got him from a McMurray Indian," he explained. "He's thin as a window now, but when I bring him back he'll be fat as a pig. Ain't it a shame the way those Indians treat their dogs? Why, last winter near

Willow Lake I found two dogs tied up that had starved to death! Think of leaving them there that way!" I was glad of his indignation.

I said to Bishop Grouard: "Please tell me something good of the Indians. I hear so much to their discredit."

"I love them all," the old man naïvely replied. "They love me. They have shown it in many ways. When I go to the Indian habitations, they give me of their best. Of course they have no dishes and no cutlery as we have. But a woman will take such a dish as she may have and wipe it out and cut meat into bits and bring them to me. 'She hath done what she could.' One must talk their language and come to know their ways. Then one will find how good and gentle they can be. None is their equal to see and to describe the way an animal goes through the snow. They miss nothing. You cannot read in any work of fiction descriptions such as they give in their own words. All are Christians. When they see a priest they seek a prayer—the first thing they wish is to confess. They know that the first aid to the healing of the body is the relief confession brings to the soul."

CHAPTER III

LITTLE BR'ER RABBIT

He was lying in the raspberry bushes on the banks of the Clearwater, three hundred miles north of Edmonton, when they found him. The raspberries were turning from green to red, and that was one vivid reason for his coming, though it might have been a danger signal. Like the Br'er Rabbit of Uncle Remus, he was born and brought up in the briar patch. But he was young, and new to the ways of man. That was how he came to blunder into the snare. Briars were nothing to him. But a loop of brass, flashing yellow as a filament of sunshine, amid the raspberry leaves, the fern, and the brilliant purple of the firewood may be difficult even for the large bright eyes of a rabbit to discern.

A wise old rabbit might have understood and wobbled his nose and shunned the peril—but in a country where the lynx and the hunting "husky" live on him, a rabbit seldom has time to grow old and wise. His short life is migration at top speed with a thumping heart from one flimsy shelter to another in the damp or dry-burned shade.

This young bunny, at any rate, knew nothing of the cunning architecture that was his undoing. He did not know how the Indian fixes a stick like a wellsweep in a crotch, with the loop of wire or number three twine, or

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sometimes horsehair, or even the raveling of a sack, hanging down like the old oaken bucket, over the rabbit run. He did not know that an Indian prefers the meat of a rabbit that has been strangled to that of one caught by the leg. It is just as it is with the moose. If the moose runs a long way ere he falls with the hunter's bullet, the agitation and the rush of blood make the meat too strong to eat. An Indian on snowshoes in three hours ran a great moose to a standstill. The creature's feet were cut to the bone and the snow was red with the blood. The Indian stood confronting the animal, whose ribs were heaving and whose tongue was out as he gazed at the hunter while the hunter looked at him. Then the Indian flapped the moose on the nose with the back of his muskrat glove and rushed away. There is a dormant element of sportsmanship somewhere in the make-up even of a child of Nature who maltreats his horses and starves his dogs.

The rabbit was caught by the leg, not by the neck; and so he was not choked. But he must have toiled long to free himself, long enough to spoil the taste of him as meat; and when they found him he lay on the ground, tired out, as if he were tame and waiting for them there. They were passengers from the steamer, which had tied up to the bank to replenish its supply of firewood. They brought him aboard by the long ears, complaining like a baby pig, his heart athrob like a drum, and though he was cradled and soothed in a girl's arms, he revived to wiggle, and tried to bite. But it was a last violent effort. After that, he seemed to have made up what mind he had to accept his fate with resignation. No doubt he knew something about death, though he knew so little about life. You can

see rabbits' skulls and spines in the forest in many places, if you live close to the ground.

He was put on the table in the middle of a card game, suddenly: and the players were amused with him. They stroked his fur and his soft ears. He lay lethargic as a paper-weight—his eyes the sole apparent animation. He was free to jump if he chose, but of him it might be said as of Wordsworth's Lucy—no motion had he now, no force. His attitude only asked, "What will you do with me?"

Overhead were brand-new electric lights, of which the boat was proud. A phonograph was bawling. The green of the cloth upon the table had nothing of the moss or fern about it. Probably he thirsted. His ribs stood out like the ribs of a small accordion that could take breath but emit no tune.

"Look at those feet!" exclaimed one of the shirt-sleeved card-players. "They're nearly as big as my hand. What kind of rabbit do you call that? It oughta be a jack for a game o' cards like this. There ought to be a heap o' luck in a left hind foot the size o' that one."

"It's a Snowshoe rabbit," observed the old-timer, refusing to heed the jests. "I've snared thousands. They're mor'n a pest, they're a plague, to the farmers. I knew a man who'd kill two or three with a fork every time he went to his haymow—he had 'em stacked up in a pile behind the house as if they was cord-wood. 'Minds me of the girl was takin' an examination to be teacher. They asked her what a wild-cat bank was. She didn't know. But she had to answer somethin', so she wrote: 'Years ago there was a bounty on wild-cat pelts. As fast as they paid the bounty, they threw the

skins out of the window. They piled up under the window in mounds. These mounds were known as wild-cat banks.' "

"We pay $90 a ton for hay at Fitzgerald," said a standing listener. "The rabbits'll eat anything that grows. They leave young poplars, willows, an' jack-pine just white sticks. I sure am sorry when their cycle comes round."

"Their cycle?" queried the tenderfoot.

"Yes. I don't mean no bicycle. But every four or seven years the rabbit comes round, same as seventeen-year locusts in some other places."

The rabbit had plenty of time to wait for explanations. He was as immobile as the ashtray—by this time he had become almost a fixture, an accepted part of the furniture. You wondered if he was meditating a sudden mighty leap with those big snowshoe feet of his.

"The lynxes come when there are rabbits. They don't always come. But anyway, it takes rabbits to bring 'em. They go white in winter. They're the only kind o' rabbit we have. The jacks o' the prairies is twice the size. The cotton-tails down south has all four feet the same size. These fellows have got to be able to take off from the snow Evolution, I suppose. Say, where are they gettin' with all this evolution talk in your country?" He turned to the American. "Is Bryan or Darwin a-goin' to win out?"

But the last man who dealt still had a word of wisdom to put into the pot on the theme of rabbits.

"They get full of boils where you get too many of 'em," he pontificated. "The same thing happens to muskrats. An' it's the same kind o' boils. They tell

me it happens to beavers, too, but beavers ain't in my line. I do what you might call miskellaneous farmin', an' don't pay much attention to the creatures, 'cept when they bother me. I suppose with the rabbits an' the muskrats an' the beavers gettin' to be too many of 'em, it's like human bein's. Where you get too many humans it ain't healthy. I'd die in a city. I bet this little vermin here is dyin', now, of too much publicity."

If the eyes were not so bright and round, it would have been a plausible theory.

"Anyway," the "miskellaneous" farmer went on, "he's sure to curl up an' peter out pretty soon if he ain't restored to his native heath. I'm willin' to be a committee of one to put him back in the woods. All in favor say aye. Aye! It's a vote. The dog's asleep on the scow. He wan't know. Don't nobody tell him. I sure do hate a rabbit. The rabbits has most et me outa house 'n' home. But I can tell just how the little beggar feels."

He took him up maternally, and ran his fingers over the white edges of the silky ears. "I oughta chuck the little cuss into the river. But I ain't goin' to. Not at all. When you take a little animal one by one, it don't somehow seem the same. I never was no good as a trapper."

With the committee of one the rest of the group trailed across the sagging plank to the ragged overhang of the woodland above the stream. It was quite dark, and the moon showed a fiery face through the trees.

The committee put the rabbit on the ground. It did not stir.

"Dead!" exclaimed a volunteer coroner from the gazing ring.

"No, he ain't," said the committee. "Look at his whiskers wiggle." In the radiance from the boat's windows the little creature was like a star actor "upstage" in the spotlight's glare.

"He don't like the light," explained the committee. "See, he's on the move now."

The rabbit made the first motion on his own account since he was placed on the table amid the game of cards. He put out his nose and nibbled at a leaf. Emboldened, he ate another and another. Yes—these were his own real woods again. The leaves were not painted cloth or polished board. Beyond them the darkness and the coolness invited—beyond them was quiet, and freedom from harrying.

The humans who were watching were still expectant of that tremendous leap. They wanted to see what those feet, so ridiculously big for such a morsel of fur, could do. But he would not satisfy their curiosity. Perhaps he was too weak and too dispirited. Suppose for hours in an agony of fear you had been pulling at your own tendons, held in a wire noose. What could you immediately do at broad or high jumping then? A quick recuperation to resiliency was too much to ask of this exhausted bunny.

But the leaves had given him courage. The leaves had told him what no other tongues could tell. His home was there. The way was free. He hobbled dimly into a bush; there was the faintest rustle through a tuft of grass beyond—and he was no more seen.

"Yes," said the committee, "I know just how he felt. I been back to the cities, twelve years ago—and the

noise an' the light and the crowd felt to me the same way it musta felt to him comin' blinkin' into that hot, tight room o' people. I remember gettin' into one o' these here revolvin' doors at a store, goin' round and round lookin' for the way out. When I came away, I had a lotta boils, too. It's no use talkin'—the woods is the place for a rabbit. If they'd only stay there—they'd git along all right. I ain't got no room for 'em in my vegetable garden, I'll tell the world. No sirree! Let 'em come round my garden 'n' my haystack an' I'll shoot 'em down same as if they was a timber-wolf. But it seems to me this here case is different. We was encroachin' on his proputty, not him on ours. They was his woods: he had a right to 'em, same as me to my farm. I ain't never studied no law—but miskellaneous farmin' teaches ye a lotta things."

CHAPTER IV

PIPES OF PANDEMONIUM

I LAY awake in my upper berth wondering how many different kinds of noise are producible aboard and about a Mackenzie River steamboat. From the tops of their voices to the bottoms of their feet, our ships' company were past masters of them all. Not in a captious, peevish spirit is this written. I wish to pay my tribute of unmitigated admiration, my unfeigned and fearful respects to those who have discovered so many separate ways of murdering sleep with such simple instruments as a ukulele, a B-flat clarinet, a wire-strung violin; an ax, a hawser, and a chain; spruce logs dropped or hurled down the bank for fuel; a big steam whistle and a little, fretful one; community singing and speaking outside one's cabin window; the heels of heavy boots overhead and the timbre of heavy voices down below. Then there are eight horses stamping because of flies, and fifteen dogs howling because of the moon. There are babies teething and crying. Percolating through the sum and substance of all other sounds is the talking-machine loaded to the muzzle with jazz.

Would you have a fair idea of the boat, you may take any row of bathhouses you like, which will do for the staterooms or cabins. At the end of the row put a lawn-mower many times enlarged. That will serve for the paddle-wheel, which at its best revolves twenty-

seven times per minute till we get round the corner from the people waving farewell on the bank. After the flying start we sink exhausted back to normalcy.

The B-flat clarinet is owned by the night watchman, "Slim." He is six feet, five inches in length—three and a half inches too long for his berth, so you cannot blame him for lying on his back, with his knees against the roof of his cell, foozling his approach to the art of music when the orthodox night watchman would be sound asleep. Wandering and intermittent are the notes, but some day, no doubt, he will gather enough of them together for a tune. The wire-strung fiddle plays "The Red River Jig," if the fiddler has room for his feet on the floor: if you stop him from "humorin' of it with his foot" by putting your hand on his knee, the music dies. The ukulele artist is to be found on the corner of the woodpile, and ceases only when the last log has been pulled from beneath him by the wood-passer.

Upon the midnight clear there comes the thud of the four-foot spruce logs that are the food of our insatiable fires. The boys from the University of Alberta must be prepared to turn out at any hour to throw on a load of fuel. It is hard work—I know, for I shared it with them many times, and have the bruises to show for it. I am now nursing my left foot particularly: I was not sure whether they would have to amputate me or amputate the foot when I failed to get out of the way of a monstrous stick as it landed on the deck.

Further down the river it was daylight the clock round, and many of my amiable fellow passengers seem able by long practice to dispense with slumber altogether. To-night, Romeo and Juliet by the rail

have been holding a long discourse, four feet from my left ear. They said their fond adieux. Then in their place came one who asked his fellow:

"Have you—hic—anythin'—hic—for a drunken hic-cough—hic?"

Came the response in tender solicitude:

"No—but I can go and get you a drink of water."

"Too late!" responded the afflicted one, with the sorrows of the world in his voice. "'S too late!" The would-be Samaritan passed on, and for half an hour there was first a "hic" and then an "ough" at intervals of about forty-five seconds, though you could not depend upon it absolutely. I tried to think of remedies to proffer through the window, but the sufferer was evidently trying all I knew; and one of them—or perhaps the combination of all of them—was finally successful. Then he too moved on. I turned the pillow over. It was stuffed thoroughly with—I think—the spinal columns of jackfish, and the pits of prunes.

On the deck below was a card game, whose every wager and every heated argument rose to me like an aroma through a crack in the floor. But between the card game and my upper berth, as a buffer state of coma, lay my cell-mate asleep. Why is it that snorers are such sound sleepers? "Bob" Wildhack has made a collection of different kinds of snores for the phonograph. My cell-mate—a good old missionary priest—knew all of them, and then some. Resting from his labors among Loucheux and Slavey Indians, I would not have aroused him for anything. First it was like the gentle susurrus of bees in clover on a Berkshire farm. Then it was like the storm-wind going through the wildwood, or our paddle-wheel trying to lift and

throw aside part of the muddy bottom of Lake Athabasca. Then it was like a trombone when the vaudeville artist leans over the footlights and says "Perfesser, let us have a little music." As far as I know, the only antidote for a snorer is to become one yourself.

Overhead, it was as if all the heavy-weights aboard were engaged in a tournament for the pogo-stick championship. Such bumping and thumping! The horses below were light-footed as Pavlowa by comparison; and the folk above gave a plausible imitation of the Germans with their "drums and tramplings" going through Belgium.

Noise is not all there is to an Arctic night. Biting flies and fighting dogs, slamming doors and the slap of trump cards, all the clangors and the stridencies cannot defeat the incommunicable satisfactions that come as many ways as the wind blows or the waters run. When you have the Northern Lights for a solace and the roses of the sundown to befriend you, the snow on distant mountains and the marching silhouette of the pointed spruces for your far and near horizons, and a river broad and deliberate as life itself to carry you many hundreds of houseless miles, you would have a mean and shriveled soul indeed if you took any more notice of the minor annoyances than to laugh at them and find them picturesque.

CHAPTER V

BIG RIVER

THE Cree Indian name for the Mackenzie River means "Big River." Athabasca is "where the reeds grow." The Cree language does not seem so remote from the United States in the twentieth century, when we know that Chicago is Cree for "the place of the skunks"—the word "chica" being the polecat part of it—and Milwaukee is Cree for "good land."

It remains to a land-lubber a mystery how our Indian pilot found the way down the river through the Athabasca approaches. To the eye of the uninitiated layman the stream wore the same surface of chocolate from bank to bank: yet his keen eye detected the subtle differences between shoal and channel and made the zigzag clear across the stream sometimes from one bank to the other to find the way. He read the face of the muddy river, knowing islands and cross-currents from long experience, but not depending on his memory instead of his eyesight, for the sandbanks shift and the channel fluctuates with the wind's own fickleness.

It was a pretty sight to see a wild duck mother leading her brood of a dozen in a compact little black and white flotilla across the calm water under the bank. When we came along with our paddle-wheel threshing out its monstrous muddy waves it must have seemed like the Judgment Day to those ducklings, and they

never had seen such plumage as our soft white wreathing smoke. They used their tiny paddles with all their frantic might, full speed ahead, to keep up with our big one. Then to add to their dismay, their mother rose like a hydro-aëroplane, leaving them behind, taking a long diagonal across our bows toward the other side of the stream. Their cries were pitiful to hear. Mother had suddenly deserted them in the lurch with this roaring dragon looming over them. Obviously she was doing it in her faithful mother-duck fashion to lead us away from her brood. She would come back when we were past. But in the meantime these web-foot water-babies were as human in their protest and their terror as land-babies of our own biped species would have been.

I went below to bring wood down from the top of the pile and stack it by the pit of the firebox, ready to the hand of the boy whose business it was to open the door of his roaring furnace and chuck it in. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would have quailed before that red mouth with its many leaping tongues when the door was opened. There were splinters, and it was best to handle the logs with gloves. But when you fed those fires you had the sense of making steam more intimately and directly than in the stokehold of an ocean liner. You could watch the steam-gage mount, pound by pound, and, knowing that 200 pounds would start the safety-valve blowing off, you wondered what would happen to the varied cargo and the passenger-list if the needle ever touched the limit of the gage, 300. In a breathing interval, one overheard a transport agent telling about the horses on the portage from Fitzgerald to Fort Smith, and the horror of the "bull-

dogs"—that is, the big flies—with the horses and cattle.

"I sold two high-strung horses," he asserted, "to another trading-company for $600. They disposed of them to the Indians. The flies tortured the poor, overdriven animals till in a day and a half one of them was dead, and the other died in two days. If I had known the Indians were to get them, I never would have let them go. Most years, the flies knock off at four, and the horses are spared the torment by making the portage at night. Last year, however, the bulldogs were on the job night and day all round the clock, as it seemed. They plague the cattle as well as the horses, but they do not seriously annoy mankind, as a rule."

During the afternoon we passed the dismantled hulk of the old *McMurray,* predecessor of our boat, high and dry on the bank among the spruces—fit resting-place for the gallant veteran of the river. It is a mournful thing when a river monarch is forced to abdicate: witness the passing of the *Mary Powell,* so long the empress of the Hudson River, even as the *McMurray* was a queen of the Hudson's Bay Company fleet for so many years.

As we moused our way through the tangle of islands and channels comprising the tortuous and dubious approaches to Lake Athabasca, a long, thick log reaching far out toward the middle of the stream at a sharp bend was the cause of a trivial accident that might have been serious. The scow declined to round the corner with us, and thrusting her snub nose at the mud of the farther bank proceeded to ascend it. The prow slid up so far above the stream that it seemed as if the whole of the craft with its heavy load under canvas

might take to the land. There was a cracking of stout timber as the wire rope tore away a buffer at the rear, but then the scow thought better of her vain adventure, and slid back again into the stream, as easily as at a launching, leaving only a flat, wide, slimy trail to mark the spot.

Seeing that the scow did not behave herself in front of us, she was demoted from the place of honor in the lead, and lashed at the port side, her nose twelve feet behind that of the larger vessel. There was something strangely human and humorous about the whole maneuver: the smaller boat, in the lead, had performed excellently for a long time, had then become intoxicated by the undisputed dominion of the waterway, and her ensuing misbehavior had led to relegation in disgrace.

I watched the deck hands lashing the refractory scow alongside, and reflected on the difference between the old order of sailor and the new. When sails were in their glory, knots were tied; now that steam is everything, knots are made. Our hardy breed of navigators seemed to be able to turn their hands to anything that needs to be done upon or with a boat, and they would be just as much at home as lumber-jacks in winter time.

When we came to the lake, trappers hailed us from the shore, rowed out, and dragged themselves and their boat upon the scow to be ferried across Lake Athabasca. We were favored. The lake scarcely rippled in the bland sunshine. One of the ship's company had waited two days and another seven to cross that tranquil expanse, at that point narrowed to twelve miles, when a storm roused the shallow water to a fury comparable with that of the open sea. The fact that there

were stumps and snags far out from the shore told us why the pilot was still finding the channel in creeping and gingerly fashion. Here and there a leafy branch with a white rag affixed had been thrust into the muddy water to mark the course: two of these branches flaunted the Union Jack.

As we crossed the lake, I asked Bishop Grouard if the Roman Catholic Mission had its own steamer at Chipewyan. He said it had—and the vessel was a very busy one, so busy that he did not expect it to take him from our ship to the mission.

"I put the first steamer on the Peace," he added. "When the stream was high, the water rose into the trees. The trackers pulling the boats along had to go among the trees and could not make headway. They waited, and ate, but made no progress. I therefore begged the money for the steamer. I was a big beggar!"

Chipewyan straggles for a white-painted mile and a half along the rocky strand, from the group of Hudson's Bay houses with their sundial, at the right where the boat comes to land without a wharf, past the Church of England mission with the yellow house of Bishop Lucas, the schoolhouse, the cemetery, the little Pro-Cathedral, then a row of dwellings rimming a tiny bay, to the imposing four-story building of the Catholic Mission with the Bishop's house beside it, the larger building at the time of our arrival decorated in honor of Bishop Grouard's coming. I met his coadjutor bishop, C. Joussard, like Bishop Grouard a Frenchman born, and amiably humorous.

Our good half-breed pilot came along the road mournfully leading his two little boys. "I promised

them a football and could get none," he told me. If a red man could look blue he looked it. There was much satisfaction when from my bag on the ship I produced a rubber ball and rubber pigs that blew up and loudly squealed as the air escaped.

About a hundred and ten persons came to the boat, and as the population is a hundred and eighty (among them thirty whites) it was proportionally as though a million Philadelphians met a train. But part of the reason for this vast concourse of citizens was the fact that Indians (tented on the outskirts of the hamlet) had come in for their treaty—as the annual ceremony of taking five dollars apiece from the Government is called. Twenty-two persons, we learned, died this past spring from the influenza. Bishop Lucas, the Anglican bishop of the Mackenzie, who had eighteen months of medical training before he came out thirty-one years ago, nursed twoscore patients. Only one of them died. At Fond du Lac at the other end of the lake there were eighty deaths, nearly half the population.

Fortunately, this excellent missionary bishop came on our boat for the first lap of a six weeks' journey through his immense diocese of 600,000 miles—ten times the area of England. He has five priests to help him. He needs more. He told me that his congregation the Sunday before had taken up a collection of $119.55 for the starving population of Eastern Europe. A child of three who was told of it came with the forty-five cents necessary to round out the sum of $120, and said, as she put the money in his hand, "For the starving children." This, on top of such a visitation as the "flu" epidemic, and no doubt much domestic and industrial anxiety in addition.

The Bishop, a dog-lover, said it gave him great satisfaction to know that a Chipewyan man had arranged to feed dogs through the summer for three dollars a month, and a net. That meant the dog-owner must supply the means of catching the fish, for nets are costly. The curator of the dogs would take them to an island and live among them.

Bishop Lucas himself on one occasion traveled 650 miles with dogs from Fort Simpson to Fort Norman and back, 550 miles of that distance afoot, beside or behind the sledge. The journey was made to hold Christmas services for the Indians, who had never had such a celebration. Soon after he got back, he made another journey of 650 miles to Fort Resolution on Great Slave Lake. On another occasion he spent two weeks in the ice on the Peace River. He slept at another time outdoors at 63° below zero. He rolled from side to side by a fire, alternately freezing and roasting, and one of the two horses—to whom he had given his own blankets—was frozen to death. What dogs can pull is illustrated by the fact that under one of his helpers four dogs took 1500 pounds thirty-two miles in a day over the Arctic ice.

We stopped for wood at a woodcutters' camp where there were four beautiful dogs to give thanks for our dog-biscuit, crackers, and bread; and the stewardess's helper gave a cupful of sugar to two grateful horses. More wood was picked up just where the current of the Peace entered our stream, bringing in muddy water and reversing the direction of the current in the stream that flows out of the lake. As Alexander Mackenzie, discoverer, did not fail to observe, if the lake is higher, the water flows up the Peace; if the Peace is higher,

the water flows toward the Lake—such a reversal as we had noted at the junction of the Athabasca and the Clearwater. We tied up to the bank for several hours of twilight midnight, after crossing swirling and contradictory whirlpools of current, and then traversing one glassy reach after another where the water caught its rose-flush from a gorgeous sundown such as the North alone can show. The mosquitoes swarmed from the wet wood, and the horses on the deck below pounded and snorted in their torment, threatening to stamp holes through the deck.

After I had killed, as I hoped, the last mosquito in my screened cabin, there were three from nowhere that brought their "horns of Elfland faintly blowing" in D, E flat, and F. The screen was dotted with rank outsiders trying to get in and tuning up. It was Strawinsky, Scriabin, and Schoenberg all in one. Abdul Hamid could not sleep without an orchestra going: he should have heard this dissonant nocturnal symphony of the Mackenzie. I rose, lit a candle to the dawn, and sat and waited. First I got the one in D, then the one in E flat; the one in F, the youngest and most virulent, pirouetted out of reach for a long sonata, till by a lucky swish I landed him. Those Hindoos who refuse to take life even in the lowest forms would have been sorely tempted here.

Good Bishop Lucas was as eager for our news as the mosquitoes were for our blood, and as soon as he came aboard he sat down with a file of the pictorial supplement of the *Public Ledger* from my bag and scarcely moved, except to turn the pages, for an hour. It was such fun to be able to tell him things and find he had not heard them. Tidings of the advances of

the aëroplane and the radio I hoped would seem like news of the relief of a siege laid by space and winter to heroic souls. Of the success of "Maria Chapdelaine" he knew nothing. As his own organist he loved to talk of music, and longed for a chance to listen to the playing of some one else.

We sidled up to the warehouse at Fort Fitzgerald at half-past six on Sunday morning, with a mighty toot of warning, but the arrival of a boat at this point, at the head of the rapids in the Great Slave River, is not so momentous as it would be further downstream. At Fort Fitzgerald persons count for more than houses or scenery. It used to be called Smith's Landing (the Smith of this place and of Fort Smith being Donald Smith, who afterwards became the famous Lord Strathcona, Canada's grand old man). Before that it was Graham's Landing. The newest name was bestowed in honor of Inspector Fitzgerald, of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, who with his party perished on a patrol from Fort McPherson to Dawson in 1911. The sixteen miles of rapids between Fitzgerald and Fort Smith are the sole obstacle to navigation between Fort McMurray and the Arctic. Agnes Deans Cameron in "The New North" says that the drop in that distance is 240 feet, but the accurate figure is 109 feet. At Mountain Rapids, where the drop is twenty-one feet, it was formerly necessary to haul scows to perhaps a hundred and twenty-five feet above the river—more than the entire descent from the beginning to the end of the rapids. The hauling was done with horses and block and tackle. Mackenzie with his canoes had no such helpful apparatus on June 3, 1789, when he came this way. He is laconic, and he never enlarges

on difficulties. He observes: "The landing is very steep, and close to the fall. . . . The whole of the party were now employed in taking the baggage and the canoe up the hill. One of the Indian canoes went down the fall, and was dashed to pieces. The woman who had the management of it, by quitting it in time, preserved her life, though she lost the little property it contained." This shows why it is necessary for passengers and freight to change steamers, via the busy dirt road over the sixteen separating miles. Nearest Fitzgerald are the Cassette Rapids, with a drop of twenty-nine feet; at Fort Smith are the Rapids of the Drowned, seven feet.

A humorous, kindly Fitzgerald philosopher is Captain Mills, who is a little critical of some writers who have painted the North not as it is, but as they wish it to be for purposes of "copy." "Agnes Cameron (who wrote 'The New North') was a nice woman, but she didn't go to the Arctic and see whales. She was inclined to take what others told her and not mention them."

Horses came to the door of the Hudson's Bay store as we talked, looking for shade or a smudge against their ruthless pursuers, the fat, abominable bulldog flies. The horses came as if they wanted to stamp right into the store, and nearly broke the glass banging at it with their bodies. If ever horses all but spoke, they did.

Captain Mills knocked out the ashes, and resumed. "Yes, with some writers you need a patent separator to sift out the grains of truth. There was Cy Warman. He wrote about this region between Athabasca Landing and the Barren Grounds. He hadn't been

there, but he had the names right, and could talk about it just as though he had seen everything and everybody. Yes, sir, in most of these writers you'll find some—exaggerativeness. The old-timers know better, and it gives them a big laugh. Down this way a man can't come in without our knowing all about him—how much money he has in his clothes, whether he's single or married, and what he had to eat for his last meal in Edmonton."

Entered a tall, lank fellow, to purchase a package of cigarettes. "How are you, Hal?" was the hearty greeting. "Loose as ashes and twice as dusty, ain't ye? Well, boy, I'm glad to see every bit of ye."

"Have a cigarette?" asked the younger man, affably.

"Well," said the Captain, "I don't know as I ought. Last time I took a cigarette I ran into five inches of water when I was drawing a foot. It was as foggy as the inside of a cow. Yes, thank you. I will spoil the Egyptians.

"That cook on the *Mackenzie River* certainly can camouflage the canned stuff." A bulldog fly lit on the veteran's hand. "Say, let go there!" he shouted. "Take a fresh hold!——You may say you met Bishop Grouard? My! the games of chess we've had together! He used to play the other fellow's game as well as his own. 'Yes,' he would say, 'I see what you mean, my dear sir. You would move your knight to that square and take my pawn and then to get out of check I shall have to sacrifice. But I will not permit. No, indeed, I will not. See! I move out my fool, so. There goes my fool.' 'Why do you call it your fool?' I would ask. 'My dear sir,' he would answer, 'are not

a bishop and a fool the same thing?' and he would go off into peals of laughter.

"Do I know Colin Frazer at Chipewyan? I sure do! Remember one time he was shooting with an ammunition agent. First it was clay pigeons. Then cartridges. Then the brass end of a cartridge. Both of them hit it, twice. I picked it up, and I made believe Colin Frazer had hit it and the other fellow had missed. Then I made fun of him. I said, 'You were licked by a man of the country.' Later he found out I was only fooling, and he said, 'You certainly hornswoggled me!'

"Oh, yes, we do a little trading now and then. There was a fellow here a while back, who said he wanted five pounds of blue ointment. 'What d'ye want that much for?' somebody says. 'Man, that's enough to kill all the lice in Alberta!' 'Well,' he says, 'I've got 'em!' Why, sir, the lice at Good Hope set up an' barked at ye. They were big enough to wear glasses."

Another local worthy is Aleck Kennedy, who had come in with his white duck tent to meet the boat. He was a trifle downcast because dogs broke in and took his bacon, a pair of moccasins, and a loaf of bread. Kennedy was one of those twenty-one Athabascan canoemen who went out to Egypt. Burnaby, hero of the ride to Khiva, and Wolseley were among those he served. The Athabascans had brought birch-bark canoes of their own, but in the hot sun the seams opened and the birch curled up. The rapids from Wadi Halfa were full of whirlpools, and the sandstorms filled their eyes and ears.

Inspector Fletcher, of the Mounted Police, was good enough to show me exquisite examples of the workmanship of the Indian women. This gallant officer, a

former student of Clare College, Cambridge, is the one who brought in the first person to be hanged in the Northwest, in 1921. From other sources I gleaned the story. The murderer had killed his wife with an ax and a gun, and had let his infant freeze to death. Said a teamster with whom I fell into conversation on the Fitzgerald portage: "The man was a jealous maniac. I knew him. I drove dogs with him on Great Slave Lake. I have no use for a man who takes an ax to his dogs when he gets angry at them. That's what he did."

The Inspector traveled for three weeks with the murderer, and the body of the victim on a sled. His prisoner acted as forerunner—that is to say, the man who goes ahead on snowshoes to break the trail for the dogs. It is hard to imagine a more ghastly journey.

Mr. Conibear, of Fort Smith, with his son and a neighbor, was on his way over the ice to Fort Norman to stake out oil claims when they fell in with the party. First they met the forerunner, far in advance of the rest. They did not know, of course, who he was. He greeted them and shook hands. Then he exclaimed, "Me in much trouble," burst into tears, and hastened on. When Mr. Conibear met the rest of the party he learned of the tragedy. Of course the Inspector was perfectly safe in letting his man go on ahead this way. The supplies and the food were all on the sled. Had the forerunner chosen to decamp into the wilderness, he must soon have perished of cold and starvation. Moreover, wherever he went he inevitably left a track by which he could be followed. It is not difficult to imagine the state of the man's mind. By the time the journey was over he had almost lost his

reason. He had all the while been traveling with the mute accusation of the dead body of his wife on the sled behind him. The corpse was frozen: it would be thawed, examined, and used as evidence against him. By day or night he could not rid himself of the awful millstone—forever round his neck like the albatross.

When the execution took place, the murderer was shackled. He had to be dragged to the spot, since he refused to use his feet. A high fence—using three thousand feet of lumber, one is told—was put up around the gibbet. At Fort Smith I was taken to see the place in the forest where the gibbet still stands as a warning to Indians, "breeds," and white men. Two young, strong spruces had been cleared except for the top branches—almost like the "lob-sticks" which in other places are trimmed and named in honor of some one deemed worthy of commemoration. The planed board—looking as new as on that somber day last November—is placed across at a height of some twenty-five feet above the ground. Round about is unspoiled woodland. At the foot of the gallows is an open grave. It was never used. The white hand of mercy, lenient to the red hand of murder, permitted the burial of the assassin in the consecrated ground of the cemetery not far off, with its fences to keep out the dogs. Two hundred yards away is the burnt ruin where the guardhouse stood, in which the prisoner was confined. From his jail to the gallows runs a path with springing green turf beside it, and the trees meeting above it, an exquisite vista in white and green. He began that short trail calmly enough: ere he came to the end of it he was a doddering imbecile, and he bit and tore at the rope with which he was hanged.

Nowhere else did I find the mosquitoes so thick as at the foot of that gallows-tree. They seemed to rise out of the very ground to defend it.

One of the most beautiful objects of native workmanship shown me by Inspector Fitzgerald was a red belt made of porcupine quills. There were bags of green or gray fashioned from the plumage of the mallard duck. Another gray bag was the contribution of the red-necked loon. There were rogans—small bowls or buckets—of birch-bark, water-tight, pitched with spruce gum and sewed with spruce roots, the workmanship as delicate as in a fine Panama hat.

Such articles as these constantly grow rarer and more costly. The traveler shares the experience of the disgruntled Panama Canal employee who went to Costa Rica in quest of the golden images that used to be numerous. He wrote home, "The price of gods has riz!" Mr. and Mrs. Godsell of Fitzgerald have a very fine collection of Indian handiwork. Mr. Godsell, whose hobby is the aboriginal culture, devised and supervised the impressive Hudson's Bay Company pageant at Winnipeg in 1920, given to mark the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Company. Indians of the East and West were brought together in competitive fraternity for the first time. Dr. J. D. Harrison of Edmonton has a collection of about three hundred pieces of the native craft. A moose-skin that used to be two or three dollars now costs $40. Mr. Mayhew of Vancouver, an ardent collector, vainly offered $200 for a "moss-bag" of cloth, silk, velvet, and beads. A moss-bag is used as a receptacle for a baby, and is stuffed with moss after the child is put in it. Few women can be found with

the patience for the hand-wrought instead of the machine-made article. When the Indians come in to "take treaty," instead of the old-time teepee they often use the ordinary tent of commerce. The duck is bought and the women sew the tents on the sewing-machine. It is now very hard to obtain even babiche, the deer rawhide used for thongs and lacing.

The Eskimos also have sewing-machines. They are quick to grasp new ideas, and they want all the white man's inventions. As soon as they saw thermos bottles, they must have them. They are more prudent shoppers than the Indians. The Indians, if they have any change, cannot put it in their pockets. They feel that they must spend all they have.

The Eskimos, according to Inspector Fletcher, are more given to working in ivory and caribou-skin. Beautiful caribou artikis (parkas) with the fur turned outside or inside, have trimmings of wolverine fur, said to be the only sort to which damp snow will not cling. At Chipewyan, women work in white deerskin, silk-sewed. Pliant gloves of moose-skin have more or less elaborate floral patterns of dyed moose-hair sewed in place.

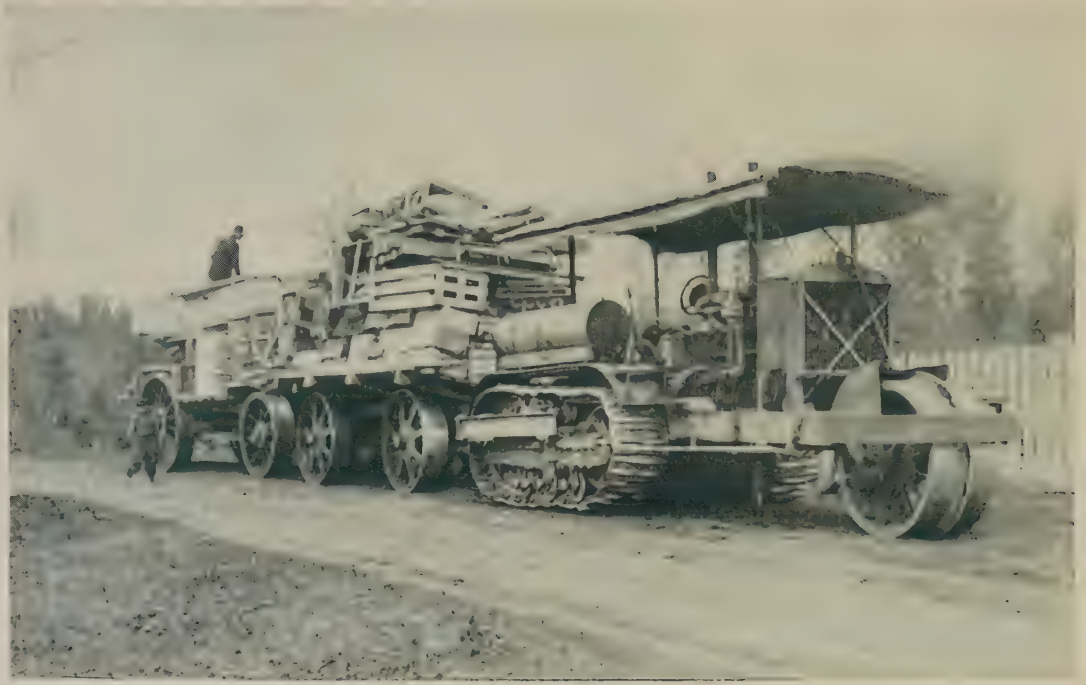
The dreaded transit of the portage turned out to be easy and comfortable. Bishop Lucas and I had a joy-ride in a motor-truck fitted with seats for passengers, and the journey took but two hours. The sky was "so soft, so bright, so beamin' blue," the road was fairly firm and not too full of holes, and beauty lined the way with spruces, birches, cottonwood (balm of Gilead), and many other trees, with the flowers of the wild strawberry, the wild rose, and the wild honeysuckle beside the road. Bulldog flies are not attracted by

motors as by horses and cattle, and the pace was a little too fast for the mosquito.

When I came back a month later, I made the transit in five hours at night on a two-horse load of dried whitefish with Constable MacIver of the Mounted Police. There were mudholes then, and mosquitoes were plentiful; but the cool night air and the Northern Lights, like soft green fog pulsating and suffusing the sky, more than compensated for any discomfort.

On the present occasion we caught glimpses of the rapids through the trees, and understood what a battle it would be to bring a scow through such a seething turmoil of the waters. The brilliant dragon-flies, black and green, banded like sounding-poles used for the shallows, are called mosquito-hawks, because of their favorite prey. One feels like invoking Ottawa to stock the air with them. Spruce partridges and squirrels abound in the greenwood; thrushes and many other birds are musical. A Thoreau, an Audubon, a Borrow would find satisfaction here, where the sky-blue butterflies flit above dandelions and purple anemones. Silence? Not here! When the noise of the motor stops that the leaky radiator may again be filled from a brown-running brook, the air drums, thrums, throbs, drones, hums, and quivers with the fullness of ephemeral insect life abroad and ablaze in the short, fierce summer. The roar of the rapids is ceaseless in the far background, like the rumble of a freight-train that never arrives. But think of the agonizing toil of the old days, tracking up stream, hauling those scows overland!

A sturdy carter said: "I get $1 a hundred, and I made $122 last week after paying for my horse-feed.



Tractor on the Portage

Watchful Waiting

Timothy hay imported costs $124 a ton. Our own swamp hay costs $60 a ton. Of course our season is short: we have to work day and night. It's cruelly hard on the horses with the flies. Some drivers do all they can to protect their horses against the insects. I use tallow mixed with other things, besides a body net and a hood with holes for the ears. Makes 'em look like the Ku-Kluxes. That man we passed on the road is the cruelest white man I know to his horses. Did you see what a mass of flies they were?

"When it rains, this road's a hog-trough. Then we cut the loads in half—from about two tons to about one. At that, we do pretty well. Things cost high, but not so much as they did. Competition has sent oats down from $8 a hundred-weight to $4 a hundred-weight.

"I tell you, those H. B. storekeepers don't have an easy time of it. They may expect an Indian pounding at the door any hour of the night. They've got to rise and let 'em in or the customer'll get mad. For the one that'll work, this is the country of least resistance. I came from Scotland. I like it here. But I'm never idle. It rained last year and there was only a little hay. But I've got some. A farmer here can do a little trapping on the side, too: a mink now and then at $12 for a skin comes in handy."

A walk of a few steps along a trapper's path, away from the portage road, showed how easy it would be to lose oneself in the trackless woods. In a moment the sunshot forest glade of white birches about one was everywhere the same. In this direction the road, unseen, was a few feet away; in the opposite direction you might go hundreds of miles, if you did not

starve, and you would find no house, no hint of a trail.

What is solitude? Only the empty man is bored. A writer has something to do everywhere. He may at least amuse himself with the great game Robert Louis Stevenson described—that hopeless endeavor to fit the thing seen and felt with the word written.

There was Peter Bourke of Bird Rock in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. He went out to that rock, with wife and son, after two keepers of the light had gone mad from loneliness. He was determined not to follow suit, so each year when the lighthouse tender came he divided the mail she brought into 365 portions, one for each of the pigeon-holes he had prepared in a large box. Then he and his children (a daughter was born on the islet) had the sensation of letters fresh each day, though sent a year before. No: Peter Bourke was never idle. There were the gun-cotton bombs to explode every twenty minutes when there was fog. But more than that, there was study each night—in rotation, geology, the birds, Robert Burns's poems, foreign languages. Each member of the little family learned a musical instrument.

Is the Reverend Edward Hester lonely, whom I heard when he spoke in the tiny, plain-board Church of England chapel, at Fort Smith, in the evening? He has been missionary in Ungava, in Baffin Land, and on Coronation Gulf. He now takes to his winter, in an Eskimo hamlet of the Mackenzie Delta, one thousand copies of an Eskimo primer he has written. He knows thousands of words in several dialects of that abstruse, refractory language. No, such a priest as he is not lonely: the peace of God goes with him where he goes.

CHAPTER VI

"NORTHWEST-BLOWN"

FORT SMITH is barely on the north side of the line dividing Alberta from the Northwest Territories. Miss Cameron, in her book which I have quoted, considered it the deadest place she saw. Hawthorne Daniel, writing in 1921, found "Governor" O. S. Finnie administering in a tent, and the Bank of Canada similarly domiciled. Both have log buildings now, and in the "Governor's" house there is a good deal of "solid comfort." As Mr. Daniel observes, the educational and ecclesiastical plantation of the Roman Catholics is considerable. Mrs. Conibear and her store are social institutions. Dogs and boats of assorted sizes clutter the hot, sandy river-bank, which pitches down to the stream, at the edge of the last of the rapids, at an alarming slant. In the midst of the slope, among the bushes and beclouded by mosquitoes, are vigorous springs of clear, cold water.

I boarded the boat—the *Mackenzie River*—for a prospective wait of eight or ten days (which became eleven) till the freight should have crossed the portage, the ice should be out of Great Slave Lake, and a heroic and loyal Hudson's Bay official, delayed by illness, should be enabled to overtake the vessel for the annual long haul to Fort McPherson and his duties of inspection and instruction incident thereto. Though at the first *coup d'œil* Fort Smith seems the desolate and

cheerless place Miss Cameron found it, a closer acquaintance discloses much that is of interest.

"Government House," if one may call it that, was built by the young men of the administrative staff from logs. Mr. Brownlee was the architect of the fireplace. To get the stones, it was necessary to cross the river and rob them from the very jaws of the rapids. It is a remarkable thing that in the soil of Fort Smith are no stones—as a native remarked, "not even one to throw at a dog." The supply of boat-brought stones gave out, and rather than stem the river again the builders continued with cement, finishing with a tin stovepipe chimney, filling the chinks lower down with cement and mud. They built another house for offices, and another for a stable; constructed an ice-house, dug three wells to a depth of twenty feet, started a market garden which flourishes with every kind of vegetable that can be raised here, and ran a roadway sixty feet wide to the Alberta frontier. Not a bad season's work for gentlemen adventurers supposed in the main to concern themselves with clerical and accountant duties.

The "Governor" is more correctly the Director of the Northwest Territories, and his headquarters are at Ottawa. Major L. T. Burwash is the resident Mining Recorder, Agent of the Dominion Lands and Timber Agent. Here is a radio-receiving outfit, with aërials, awaiting a competent operator. Mr. Henderson, who used the apparatus at Fort Providence, has returned to his government post at Ottawa.

In 1921 this office was a very busy place. The oil-rush of 1920 was renewed, and many were staking claims at Fort Norman. Since then there has been a

At Fort Smith

The Dogs of Fort Smith

lull, and the Dominion Government has canceled the rule then operative that a new arrival must show that he had "grub-staked" himself for a year before going in. Nor is it necessary to obtain the approval of the Mounted Police. The Conibears of Fort Smith, father and son, with a companion, made an extraordinary journey on the ice, nine hundred miles each way, to stake out their three oil claims, and Mr. Conibear has a manuscript of his story of the journey in diary form.

In 1922 there was a flurry of excitement over a discovery of gold along the South Nahanni River. This stream flows into the Liard, and is in a region not easy of access. Perhaps a dozen prospectors went in from Fort Smith, which can ill afford to lose any of its able bodied householders, and others "mushed" from the Yukon. The latter adventurers were influenced in particular by the example of "Kit" Field, an old-timer in whose sagacity they had learned to put their trust.

Another outstanding event of 1922 was the sojourn of Dr. Miller, a Hudson's Bay dentist, the first to visit the place in nine years. He found plenty to do, and those who required his professional attentions seem to have incurred the envy of the less fortunate who had no good excuse for employing his forceps and his drills. However uneasy lies the head that wears a crown, a filling of silver (the material he uses) confers personal distinction, and a set of false teeth is a family heirloom not to be despised.

The Indian Agent is the Reverend Gerald Card, good friend of his wards and a first-class farmer. If he were not so busy, he might revive the services in the tiny unpainted hut that is all the Church of England has to show in comparison with the large and flourishing

Roman Catholic Mission. It is no part of an Indian agent's task to officiate at the altar—or the halter. But it is too bad that the few white Protestants may not hope for a church service more than once or twice a year, when a clergyman happens to pass through Fort Smith of a Sunday. Let the captious critic, however, remember the dimensions of the diocese, and the fewness of the laborers in so immense a vineyard. Mrs. Conibear says that the Protestants have petitioned repeatedly for a resident clergyman.

This good woman, who with her husband runs a store that is a model emporium for quality, variety, and moderation in prices, is a mainstay of the community, as Mrs. Sutherland is at McMurray, or Mrs. Fowler is at Waterways, and another example of the boundless feminine influence for good. Her daughter was for five years the only white girl in the Northwest Territories. Recently there have been several at Fort Simpson, in the family of a prospector. Their departure in the fall of 1922 restores to Miss Conibear the distinction. As the village school, taught by one of the Catholic sisters, does not admit pupils beyond the age of twelve, the young woman has been carrying on her own higher education in arithmetic and grammar by correspondence with a school in Toronto. While I was telling the Conibears and the bank manager, Mr. Byers, about Peter Bourke, the plucky lighthouse keeper, Mrs. Conibear hurriedly left the room. I was a little disappointed, as I feared I had been dull. But she presently returned to say that a bulldog fly had crawled down her back: she was bored in a different way.

The Conibears carved their homestead out of the

The Conibear's House

The Bank, Fort Smith

woods. The father and the two sons made the house. Mother and daughter created a lawn—said to be the only one in the Northwest—by transplanting bits of grassy turf wherever they could find it. The lawn is kept in order by the sole lawn-mower of the region. It took one back in memory to Athens in the summer of 1915, when the only lawn-mower belonged to the Crown Prince, and his democratic neighbors used to send over to the palace to borrow it. The self-reliance of this family reminded me of the story of John and Martha Gilley of the Maine coast, as Dr. Charles W. Eliot has told it in "The Forgotten Millions." There is nothing about a house or a garden that they could not do, and have not done, in a place where nothing comes cheaply or easily and the struggle—however lit with cheer and courage—is unending. Mrs. Conibear is from England; she was once superintendent of nurses at the Exeter hospital.

"The Caribou Indians starved last winter," said Mrs. Conibear, "in addition to the smallpox and the 'flu' among them. They sent for help, and a priest went to them with a sled-load of flour. Their dogs died. There were scarcely three teams among them all. A dozen years ago—the year before we came here—the caribou wore a trail at Resolution that passed between the priest's house and the store. They could sit in front of the houses and shoot the fattest. The tongues were pickled by the barrel. At Good Hope an Indian said the horns were like 'brulé' (burnt wood) and their breath like fog, they came in such a great herd. Here at Fort Smith we haven't tasted caribou meat for three years."

At Mrs. Conibear's store I bought dried whitefish,

at ten cents apiece, to feed to the dogs that—to the number of fifteen or twenty—were always hungrily expectant alongshore under the rail of the boat. The cook and the two good-natured stewardesses often threw them things. Every Mackenzie dog lives as near the boats as he can in summer time, and thinks nothing of lying for hours on wet, cold sand. His table manners are deplorable.

As for the Fort Smith Indians, one of the best of them, Denny Goulé, passed away with the "flu" last winter. Tradition has it that the fatal malady was brought on when he rushed out barefoot into the snow upon the midnight, to stop a dog-fight among his "puppies," as he always styled them. At seventy-six, he came in second in a foot-race with young men. A *laudator temporis acti,* he forever bewailed the Indian decadence, from a day when a Hudson's Bay factor truly was a factor, with the power of a nineteenth-century czar. Then the Sunday ordinance forbade work, and the factor would jail you if you tried it. Denny Goulé mystified the other Indians by feeding his dogs in summer when they were not working; and he went fishing for them. When the young men of the "Governor's" staff cut the sixty-six-foot road he inveighed against them. What? They were destroying God's own creatures, the trees of the forest, on God's own land—the eminent domain of wolf and moose and buffalo and Indian. When he had long and faithfully served the Company, it was pleased to bestow on him a medal. He affected to despise the decoration—secretly he was proud of it. "Huh!" he exclaimed. "Medal no good to Denny Goulé. Medal no buy ration flour." His way of using flour was the usual

Indian way. A hole is made in the top of the bag, and water is poured in. The lump is taken out and baked. An Indian seems to have a measureless capacity for flour.

Denny was an asset to "the Company." His annual custom was a pilgrimage by a river-boat to all the posts, where he had relatives and friends too numerous to mention. His shipboard duties were of the lightest and most nominal order—he was warden of the flying sparks, and he dusted off the decks. When a landing was made, Denny kissed on both cheeks every one within reach, and made a speech in Cree which some understood and some did not. But the tenor of the speech was unexceptionable—he urged loyalty to the Company, steadfast and indivisible, here and hereafter. Thus it will be seen that he counted on the side of stability and sobriety in an ancient, honorable, and lucrative business.

William McNeill (till 1911 one of Dr. Grenfell's "boys" at St. Anthony in Newfoundland) is the buffalo ranger, and he has two assistants. His charge is one of the two herds of wild wood buffalo left on the hemisphere. Fort Smith is the settlement closest to their muskeg demesne. He has not known them to come nearer than twenty-four miles; at the proper season, he can be sure of seeing them in a ride of two or three days: they may be met in a day.

Mr. McNeill is curator of the southern herd, that in Alberta, whose frontier is but a few hundred yards from his house. The other, the northern herd, is across the line in the Northwest Territories, and Nature is the sole protector. There is a zone of muskeg between, which neither herd ever crosses. In

the southern herd, Mr. McNeill estimates that there are 1200 to 1300 buffalo. In the northern herd there seem to be more—there may even be 1500. If the number in the two herds together may be taken as 2500, this is about four times the number estimated when Ernest Thompson Seton paid his visit to their range in 1907—an increase gratifying to every lover of the fast-disappearing big game of the North American continent. It is high time to take action for the protection of the musk-ox further north, to prevent massacre by high-powered rifles in the hands of the Eskimos. The caribou, too, though these are at present carelessly numbered by the millions, as if the number were inexhaustible and the annual migration a certainty for all time to come, will follow to extinction the buffalo of the western American plains unless measures are soon taken to save them.

The trail to and through the buffalo range starts behind the Roman Catholic Mission at Fort Smith. It passes over the Jackpine Ridge to Peace Point on the Peace River, and is navigable on horseback all the way. McNeill goes on the patrol once a month, and has cabins of refuge along the trail, using the dog-team in the winter, and horses in summer, when the idle dogs are fed a good, square meal every other day. In winter the dogs are fed twice a day. In a straight line, the distance to Peace Point is seventy miles; the trail is circuitous, and adds thirty miles.

The buffaloes live partly on moss; they browse like the moose on willows: and the "down" on the spruce trees is also found in their menu. Not for them, however, is the sign I noticed affixed to more than one tree near the hamlet. *"Dinner Menu:* 1. Bacon

and Beans. 2. More Bacon and Beans. 3. Coffee and a Smoke. 4. Water, Six Pails and Enough Elbow Grease to Put Out the Fire." The buffaloes also eat hay, like domestic cattle.

They have the region to themselves except for the wood deer and the wolves. The latter are inexorable in pursuit, forever trying to single out a youngster or a feeble elder for a concerted attack. Four wolves are enough to do for a buffalo, and Mr. McNeill has seen a pack of seventeen. They run from men and at the animal, and do not cross the trail. The largest group of buffalo McNeill has encountered—much larger than any other he has observed—numbered about a hundred and fifty. There is a beautiful story told and retold by travelers to the effect that when wolves attack, the bulls assemble the cows and the calves and form a square, facing the enemy, heads down, in bristling battle-array. This field authority thinks the pretty fancy deserves dismissal to the realm of uncorroborated fable. One would like it to be true, and of course a writer who strives to be veracious has to make up his mind that he must forfeit much of the picturesque and the dramatic to the sober and undecorative fact. The truth seems to be that the cows and calves herd by themselves, and the bulls go their own way. When defeated in battle with one another, the bulls leave the rest of the herd in sulky loneliness. The buffalo is very deliberate about getting off the trail when man approaches. He has been known to come within fifty feet of the ranger's cabin.

The wolves are too clever to be trapped. McNeill killed four last winter with strychnine. By human hunters, two buffaloes were killed during the season.

If an Indian, hard put to it for subsistence, should kill a buffalo, the law would regard him leniently—but these were instances, it seems, of wanton slaughter. The case was to come to trial in Alberta as soon as a Government inspector had made an examination and submitted a report.

An unsuccessful attempt has been made to import reindeer. Two of the animals sent to Fort Rae were not heard of again. Some died on the train and some on the river scows. Some were frozen to death north of Chipewyan. When the first spring came, the reindeer were herded and turned loose. A second time they were collected and released. Now they have wholly disappeared. No doubt the experiment in domestication will be repeated after a lapse of years. But some other subsistence must be provided to take the place of the moss, which in this region is insufficient for reindeer requirements.

There is not the need for reindeer at Fort Smith that there is in cowless places. The cows here are numerous, and seem to fend off the dogs very successfully. Like the cows, the horses are turned loose, wearing bells to tell where they are grazing. The dogs are not undisputed masters of the common ground, as in Labrador. Yet the Mackenzie dogs are as restless and as full of fight as their distant kinsdogs of the Atlantic seaboard, and the tufts of hair all along the lowest barbed wire of the fences about the Hudson's Bay Company headquarters betray their eagerness to be in every fight that is started, as the platforms on high poles advertise how nimbly they climb for anything to eat.

Dogs of one team may fight furiously with one an-

other, but they make common cause against an intruder, and if one dog of the team sallies out to pick a fight with a rival clan, his team-mates will come to his aid. It reminds one of a tale I heard told by Governor Mann of his Virginia boyhood. He and his little brother had many a fistic encounter in the nursery. Their father died, and when the stepfather came into the family he tried to intervene in one of their battles; whereupon both the little boys flew at him, exclaiming, "We keep each other for our own beating!" The study of the varieties of howl would add a chapter to that quaint list of animal cries which Gardiner has analyzed in his "The Music of Nature."

Some dogs will gladly lose a meal if they may keep other dogs—perhaps, old and toothless—from getting anything. It is displeasing to see the biggest rowdy get the most because he is the meanest and most murderous to the rest.

One river-dog, desperate with flies and mosquitoes massed upon him, walked into the stream to what seems to have been a deliberate case of suicide. A man was taken out of the country raving crazy from the incessant insect torment.

Old man Loutit, the Indian, was fond of his dogs, and they took his pack from him to keep him from the "mushing" for which advancing years made him too feeble. The dogs had bibulous, not biblical, names—"Rum," "Whisky," "Brandy," and others. "Whisky," aging like his master, was cruelly victimized by the younger huskies. Loutit said he would die if they deprived him of the society of his pets. But they separated the master from the team, and true to his promise the venerable Indian soon departed this life.

A blind dog—made blind from a beating at an Indian's hands—walked into everything, including a buzz-saw, and it was humanely decided to put him to death. First he was given the finest fish dinner he ever had in his life—he was fêted like the sacrificial victims of the Aztecs ere they were laid on the altar. Wada, the Japanese prospector, one of the noted dog-drivers of the north, once purchased at McMurray tinned sardines to the value of $30 for the dogs, when he was driving Colonel Cornwall's team.

Most of the Fort Smith dogs are comparatively tame and gentle; they see much of what may be called the floating population of the river-boats. But at Fort Resolution five years ago there was a dog with murder in his mind and eye. A little child at the mission ran out alone in defiance of the rules, and the dog pounced upon her and tore her ere he could be driven off. She was in the hospital many weeks with a lacerated scalp. The dog was not put to death, as it was uncertain which dog had attacked the child. After her recovery, she was walking in a procession of children. The dog, singling her out from the rest, went at her again. The priest in the lead rushed to her aid, and swung her high above his head. The dog leaped after her, jumped and caught her, and again mauled her severely. But the priest rescued her from the animal, got a rifle, and shot the beast.

A woman boarding at Fort Smith accidentally dropped her Pomeranian. Instantly two dogs sprang upon it, tore it apart, and consumed it in less time than it takes to describe the incident. Mr. Conibear saw the head of a child the dogs had devoured. At Fond du Lac on Lake Athabasca last fall a man had

his arm torn off by dogs, and died from the loss of blood and the shock.

The Reverend Gerald Card, the Indian Agent abovementioned, has a jurisdiction extending from Fort McMurray to Hay River. Mrs. Card is postmistress. Their home is an example of what a home in the North should be. It is not merely the home life of the Card family that is exemplary. They have a field of wheat as tall as a man, that is a miracle of science and prudence; and in the garden beside it they raise beans, peas, lettuce, rhubarb, and other vegetables abundantly. When Mr. Card was at Edmonton, he consulted Frank H. Oliver as to the wisdom of taking his wife so far from ordered and tranquil social conditions. Mr. Oliver advised him by all means to take Mrs. Card. It would have, he felt, a good influence on the entire community to have two such people domesticated in their midst. Such an object lesson offsets the practice, generally deprecated by thoughtful persons, of the white man who takes a squaw for his wife. Too often the Indian woman, accustomed to be regarded as a lowly drudge with no mind of her own and no scope of action separable from the will of her lord and master, sits on the floor of the kitchen smoking a pipe or eating rabbits' brains and cracking the skulls with her teeth, the virtual handmaid of the gentleman in the dining room who has his own friendships and business associations that remain forever a sealed book to the dusky chattel of the stove and washtub.

Mr. Card is persuader and dissuader, with a pack of red children of a larger growth to control. As trouble-man he is called on to settle innumerable dis-

putes. Sometimes the Indians become so irate they bid adieu to their families and take to the warpath. It is Mr. Card's business to induce them to forget their grievance and go home. Most of the friction is over titles to the land, and one is reminded that the word "rivals" literally signifies those who contest the possession of land along a stream. Drink and gambling are responsible for many a heated argument and occasionally a serious fracas, perhaps a cutting or shooting affray. If necessary, the appeal is to Corporal Walters and the constable of the Mounted Police.

There are not more than half a hundred Indians "taking treaty" at Fort Smith. The Indians are among the easiest victims of such maladies as the "flu," which lately has exacted its heavy toll. At Fort Resolution the number of Indians is much larger, and the treaty transaction is more animated and complicated. The agent must be on his guard against the subterfuge of those who borrow children that do not belong to their families, to collect the five dollars apiece for them which is allowed by law. It would seem extraordinary that the Indians should come so far and take so much trouble to appear, for so small an amount of money, were it not for the fact that the occasion is regarded very much as an old home week festival is looked upon in the United States. There is glad reunion and jollification—endless pow-wow and pipe-smoking and feasting. Of course the treaty money scarcely ever leaves the post where it is paid out. The storekeepers —displaying their wares enticingly, outdoors as well as in their shops, before the eyes of the spendthrift redskins—get most of it. But the Indians seem to

think the fun was worth the price they paid for their one grand annual jamboree.

While Mr. Conibear was serving as Justice of the Peace, one of the Indians stole eleven mink from the Hudson's Bay Company's store. It became the Justice's painful duty to sentence the offender to six months in jail, though it was pleaded in his behalf that the Indian had only taken back the mink after a friend had told him that he had sold them for too little. The Indian was almost beside himself with grief and terror when he learned what would be done with him. He protested that he would pine away and die in prison—he could live only in the woods, "under the wide and starry sky." But to prison he had to go. He became more than reconciled to his lot: long before his term was up he was firmly attached to his new home. When at last his sentence was served, he begged the Justice to give him six months more. Mr. Conibear could not bring himself to believe that he ought to advise him to steal eleven more mink and get in again. The Indian, with three square meals and a bed assured him for the first time in his life, pleaded in vain, and it was a tragedy for him to be sent back to his tribe.

A remarkable showing is that of the Roman Catholic Mission. The Gray Nuns have their hospital and school; the Oblate Fathers have their farms, one of them sixteen miles from the village. Even the most inflexible of Protestants could hardly withhold a tribute of enthusiastic admiration for what they have accomplished here. The hospital has an operating room, with the benevolent Dr. Macdonald as surgeon, and a dental chair as well, with a nun to operate. The

Indians stand in awe of the doctor's science, but they are relieved if it is a case of medicine from the dispensary, at the hands of one of the kind, soft-spoken sisters, instead of the ordeal of being laid on the table and sliced with a long, shining knife. School for the children was over, but in one of the rooms were Indian girls, under the nuns' tuition, making coverings to protect the horses on the portage from the torment of the bulldog flies.

In a ward were three old Indian women—one blind and deaf, with her head in her hands, another filling a pipe (for smoking is the favorite diversion of the Indian woman). Helpless old age like theirs would be abandoned on the trail in the snow, with a three days' supply of provisions, and that fate would be accepted with passive resignation by the unfortunate one. Whether it is a human being or a dog, the aborigines have no use for a cripple unable to carry a burden or cook a meal or sew bark and skins. Such a haven of peace as this in the Gray Nuns' hospital must seem an earthly paradise to these old women whose lives have linked day to day in drudgery and privation.

At first the Indians who come here, children or adults—and in some ways there is little to choose between them—are exceedingly restive, and keenly sensitive to the confinement. They have had illimitable freedom—now they must be "mannerly at table," and fold hands in prayer, and be dutiable and tractable. They must learn order and neatness, and how to tell time; they must sit in a chair and sleep in a bed. It is all so different from the teepee, where you could be as lousy and lazy as you pleased, and water was only to drink, and there were no hours—merely the seasons.

Their bishop told the sisters: "The children of the wilderness are like little birds who are caught in a cage. You must treat them as such, and be forbearing. Soon they will cease to beat vainly with their wings against the bars—they will learn that nothing is gained by rebellion." I told the good sisters the story of the attempt to start an Indian college at Harvard. Two youths were enticed from the forest primeval. One of them only has his name on the roster of Harvard alumni—Caleb Cheeshateaumuck. The other, when the spring came at the end of his freshman year, said that he heard the Great Spirit calling to him from the vernal woodland—he rushed away from the little brick building, in answer to that primal urge, and Harvard saw him no more. The nuns laughed, and said it was that way with the Indians here.

Father Mansoz showed me the farm. With what interminable toil were these arable fields created, where the forest used to be! All round us were the trees such as the priests and brothers had to clear away. The stumps were obstinate, the roots were intricately interlaced. They had no dynamite and must pry the stumps from the soil. A killing frost—this was the close of June—had browned and downed the aspiring potatoes. But these plants—since they were now beyond the flower stage—could be relied on to try twice more before giving up the struggle. There was a sumptuous wheat field. There were carrots for the horses. Rhubarb and lettuce abundantly grew. There was a comfortable barn; there was modern farming machinery. Above all, there was the disposition to toil. Father Mansoz has not been out of the country these twenty years. Like Chaucer's parish priest of old,

wide is his parish, the houses far asunder, but he does not cease to visit the nearest and the farthest. If he resembles Chaucer's priest, one of the nuns put me in mind of the Nonne Prioresse of the Canterbury pilgrimage, with her smile, her demure and humorous acceptance of a lot which no Gray Nun would agree to call a martyrdom. It was this nun's duty, among many other things, to keep the record of the temperature, for the authorities at Edmonton. The thermometer and the barometer of this Government weather bureau were kept in good condition in a shuttered box on a post in the yard. The lowest temperature she had noted was 71° below zero, on Christmas Eve, 1919, when fortunately no wind stirred.

"The first thing to be done for school children in the North," says Father Duchaussois in "The Grey Nuns in the Far North," "is to give them a thoroughly good washing. The poor blear-eyed little creatures arrive in rags, and filthy rags, crawling with vermin. An hour later you would take them for pretty little white children. But they have first to be made white! And how they dread their first bath! On July 24, Sister Honorine, taking a child out of the bath, let him down quietly in a heap of chips, whilst going one step to find a little article or two to put on him. The one step was enough. When she turned round again, the carpenter's shavings were in motion, and the little Indian was making a bee line for liberty and his native woods. Fortunately, one of the Brothers caught him before he had gone far, and brought him back to have a chance of losing his fear of clean water, and clean clothes."

Rossetti, in "The Blessed Damosel," calls the roster of names that are as sweetly sounding symphonies. He

would have like the euphony of the "choir sisters" and the "little coadjutor sisters" of the North: "Rose de Lima," "Angele," "Victorine," "Columbine," "Dosithee," "Domithilda," "Denise," "Didace," "Pulcherie," "Cecilia," "Noelia," "Florestine." Their natures are as sweet as their names.

There is a striking passage in Father Duchaussois' book, which points out the thanklessness of the task. Individual Indians are grateful, and countless instances may be cited of touching fidelity and manifest appreciation, and a real and ardent affection between the teacher and the taught, the missionary and the proselyte. Moreover, in their own camps, the Indians are hospitable, and put at the disposal of their guest whatever they have, even though they may be on pitifully short commons themselves. None who has labored among them will deny that they possess many amiable attributes, even though they are satisfied to have their womankind remain at a menial level, and show a callous disregard for the sufferings of animals. A white man who endeavored to persuade a little Indian boy to cease kicking a puppy in the eye appealed to the lad's father. All that he got for answer from the father was the gruff rejoinder, "It is his dog."

But Father Duchaussois, in candor, feels obliged to tell us:

"Even at this day in the Mackenzie Missions the priests and nuns are expected by the poor Indians to be always givers, not receivers. The Northern Indian is not himself a giver. On the contrary he takes all that he can get. He thinks it the most natural thing in the world that the Palefaces should give him everything, and he is perpetually begging whatever he wants or

fancies. If he sees a stock of provisions being laid in before winter, he thinks the priests and nuns unreasonable and avaricious. He knows that he could easily dispose of the provisions this very day. As for coming to the help of his Father in God by tithe, or gift, or unpaid service, such an idea never enters his head. Of course, as living from hand to mouth, he is often miserably poor. But if abundance comes to him through fishing or the chase, it soon disappears, or the money for which he sells it. The lucky huntsman, or fisherman, or trapper begins to feast sumptuously. He gives a feast to his family, and to his friends, and even to strangers. He takes it for granted he will have as good luck another time. If any of the spoils should happen to be wanted in the Mission House or Convent even the smallest portion must be paid for. The fact is that the Indian looks upon priests and nuns as rich. He says they have only to send a little bit of paper into the 'Great Countries,' and it will bring them back a cargo. If you tell him that in those 'great countries' there are poor needlewomen who stint themselves for his benefit; that the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Holy Childhood collect penny by penny, for the Indian Missions, sums which he would squander in an hour, he will hardly believe or understand you. He will probably laugh and say, 'But I see you have such and such a thing there; give me that.' Such is the childish mind of the Indian, though his intelligence is very keen on some subjects. As regards 'mine and thine' he seems to be unteachable. He is a communist by nature. Whenever he has anything himself, he gives it away freely and cheerfully to the first that comes, of his own friends. It must be repeated, however, that he has no feelings of generosity in regard to those who leave home and native land, to serve him at great cost. The saintly Bishop Grandin forewarned the nuns whom he was beseeching to come into his diocese: 'You will sacrifice yourselves for our poor Indians; but you will receive from them

nothing but their vermin—for which also they would expect payment, if they thought you could make any use of them.' Some of them have asked the nuns to pay them for the children whom the nuns feed and clothe and teach."

The need of such child-salvage as the Gray Nuns undertake is illustrated by the story of little Gabriel, the Sekanais Indian boy of Fort Nelson.

"He was about eight years of age when he saw his mother kill his father, and throw his little brother into the fire. He himself was saved from the same fate by his grandmother, who took him to a Sekanais named Barby, who had no children of his own. A few days later Barby's wife sickened and died. Barby, after some incantations, thought the Spirit told him that the adopted child was the cause of his wife's death. Accordingly he left the boy alone, on the bank of the Nelson River, near his wife's grave, and he removed his tent to the opposite bank. He left the little boy without food or fire, and almost naked, and watching him across the river, he took deliberate aim at him with his gun, whenever he saw the boy wandering around the grave, or coming to the water to drink, or pulling up roots to satisfy his hunger. At the end of ten days, a trader of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Nelson, Boniface Laferty, who had been one of the first pupils of the Nuns at Fort Providence, was passing Northwards to Fort Liard. He heard of the case from the little boy's grandmother. He told the two Indians whom he had with him to take the boy and hide him in a certain place, whilst he himself distracted the attention of the fierce Sekanais. The child, when found, was little more than a skeleton, on which vermin and mosquitoes had been trying to feast. He was left at Fort Liard, 'for the Nuns,' by Mr. Laferty, and he was taken to Providence, three hundred miles away, by Father Le Guen, O. M. I.

"In the Orphanage there, Gabriel remained for two years, learning how to pray to the Great Spirit and His Divine Son. But Gabriel had brought lung disease from the Nelson River, and in spite of tender care, by day and by night, he died very young."

In the Hospital of the Sacred Heart was an old man who, when the Indians were starving, ate his wife and his four children. He died in the hospital. To the sister who attended him he said, shortly before his soul took flight, "If I had a little human flesh, I think it would do me good." It is on record that in 1883 at Lake Athabasca mothers ate their dead children, and children their dead mothers.

Father Duchaussois has many stories to tell—"little histories, hardly known except in heaven"—of the sublime courage that took delicate women through the rapids and the swamps and the snows to the succor of the red people. Their labor has been the inspiring complement of the valorous devotion of the missionary priests. As Bishop Bregnat writes in his prefatory letter to the book of Father Duchaussois, "was it not in the right order of things that such missionary preachers should, amid their self-denying labors, find valiant helpers in those heroic nuns whom the church has judged worthy of the distinctive name of Sisters of Charity?"

CHAPTER VII

MACKENZIE JUSTICE

THE Royal Canadian Mounted Police—erstwhile the Royal Northwest Mounted Police—has a right to be proudly jealous of its acquired prestige. Its very name is a terror to evildoers. When a member of the force goes out on the long, long trail in quest of a malefactor, though he seems to go alone, he has at his back not merely the whole of the red-coat company but a reputation for relentless pursuit that gets the man it is after, though it has to go to the uttermost parts of the earth for him.

A salient case in point is that of the capture of two Eskimo murderers by Inspector La Nauze and two constables in 1916. The facts were set down by the Inspector in an article in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* (May, 1918), an article in which there is not a single word of self-praise. The temperance and modesty of the narrative are entirely in accord with the tradition of the force. In fact, the official reports of those who have undertaken distant and difficult duty in its name are disappointing, in their laconic restraint, to those who are looking for something like the high lights and the exaggerated accents—not to say the downright prevarication—of certain purveyors of tales of the frozen North, and sensation-loving stage-carpenters of scenarios for the "movies."

It makes the resolute, debonair "M. P." excessively weary to read and to see what is done with his uniform and his professional activity by the tribe of ink-slingers and film-doctors. He would prefer to keep out of print and off the screen if he is to be so fantastically misrepresented.

From several trustworthy personal sources I am able to amplify the Inspector's story, which can be presented merely in outline here. Two Catholic priests in 1913 went from Fort Norman to Coronation Gulf via Great Bear Lake. Their names were Rouvière and Le Roux. In some way they incurred the enmity of two Eskimos, who stabbed Father Le Roux, shot Father Rouvière, and then ate the livers of their victims, as anthropophagous savages of other lands have frequently done in the belief that the virtues of the white man thus enter into the person of the cannibal.

By way of the "moccasin telegraph"—counterpart of the "grapevine telegraph" of the Civil War—the rumor traveled in May, 1915, from Great Bear Lake to Great Slave Lake and the Mounted Police, who took action as soon as the word from Fort Smith reached Edmonton. La Nauze and two constables were sent out by Commissioner Perry. They went north by the Peace and Slave rivers, and down the Mackenzie on Hudson's Bay steamers to Fort Norman, where they arrived July 17th. There they met an explorer, D'Arcey Arden, who at Dease Bay had met Eskimos with white men's effects that were recognized by Indians as having belonged to the dead priests. Mr. Arden agreed to guide the party to Dease Bay, on Great Bear Lake, where the priests had established their headquarters. The journey from Fort

Mounted Police on Great Slave Lake

La Nauze and Eskimo Murderers

Bringing a Murderer to Trial

Norman to that point, an inconsiderable distance on the map, required about two months of the hardest kind of going. It took thirteen days to ascend the ninety miles of the Bear River to the lake, in a York boat with a laden scow. Sliding down a stream with the current is a vastly different business from tracking up it with a tow-rope, scrambling over rocks and windfalls of driftwood along the river bank. The ninety miles downstream on this river can be done in a day. Crossing the lake was the old, old story of contrary winds such as so frequently oppose the transit of every northern lake. By the time Dease Bay was reached, there was nothing to do but establish winter quarters. Dease Bay is an immense prolongation of the lake toward the northeast. Though this body of water is not yet completely explored, its maximum length is known to be about twice as great as the distance from New York to Boston. It is ice-free from mid-July to October 1st.

Hunting, fishing, and wood-cutting occupied the winter. The lowest point touched by the mercury was 60° below zero. Camp was broken March 29th, and the journey to Coronation Gulf by dog-sledge was resumed. It took a month of stormy weather, and the route was upon or along the Coppermine River. When the ice was too rough, a way was picked along the bank. The party reached the mouth of the river on April 30th, and on the night of May 7th, in a snow hut on the Dolphin and Union Straits, they found those who could tell them what they wanted to know. They were told that two Copper Eskimos (popularly styled "Blonde" Eskimo), named Sinnisiak and Uluksak were the guilty ones. The priests had been done to

death at Bloody Falls, on the Coppermine, where Samuel Hearne in 1771 had to stand and see the massacre of Eskimo by the Indians with him, whom he was powerless to hinder. The murderers of the priests were at large in the neighborhood. At last, in an Eskimo encampment on the south shore of Victoria Island, Sinnisiak—who was the chief culprit—was taken, on May 15th; and on May 22d on an island at the mouth of the Coppermine his accomplice Uluksak was arrested.

The schooner *Alaska,* of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, had come from Herschel Island, sixty miles west of the mouth of the Mackenzie, and Corporal Bruce had made the journey to meet the patrol. On July 13th the party started back aboard the schooner. Herschel Island, seven hundred miles to the west, was reached in fifteen days. There is the northernmost post of the Mounted Police. Owing to the lateness of the season, it was necessary to spend the fall and winter of 1916–1917 in this desolate place. In February, 1917, instructions came via dog-sled from Dawson, to bring the prisoners south for trial. Captors and captives left Herschel Island May 9th, and reached Calgary, Alberta, by way of the Mackenzie River, in August. Inspector La Nauze concludes his narrative with a brief mention of the trial that took place before the Chief Justice and a jury of six, in the Alberta Supreme Court, and resulted in a verdict of guilty and a death-sentence, at once commuted to life imprisonment in the far North. In September the prisoners with their interpreters and their escort returned to the North; La Nauze was given a leave of absence to visit his family in Ireland—a reward which

reminds one of the granted request of Browning's Herve Riel:

"Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the Belle Aurore!"

Throughout the story there is no attempt to make the patrol seem unusually hazardous or even arduous. But the arrest had taken those who made it more than two years, and in that period they had been called on to make forced marches such as few living white men have accomplished.

Side-lights on what occurred at and after the trial are significant. The Eskimos whose lives were at stake seem to have been those least concerned in court proceedings which they did not understand. Of course they had doffed their picturesque Arctic raiment for the sweaters and baggy overalls of civilized working-dress. But nevertheless they found the latitude of Calgary exceedingly hot and uncomfortable. The atmosphere of the courtroom was stifling to those who—outside the igloo—were accustomed to the harrowing winds over the Polar floes. Even in the igloo, as an Eskimo driver said, all you have to do to let in fresh cold air is to thrust your whip-handle through the roof over your head. But in the hot courtroom the men of the North suffered acutely. Presently they succumbed to overpowering drowsiness, and while the legal battle for their lives raged about them, they fell asleep and remained asleep all through the trial.

Corporal Walters, then at Fort Resolution, now at Fort Smith, had charge of the murderers for two years after the trial, on the way back to the far North. They were clean, industrious, competent, and imitative. Mrs. Walters would go to six o'clock mass on Sunday morn-

ing leaving the children, including an infant, in their care. The Eskimos would give the little ones their bath and have breakfast ready by the time Mrs. Walters returned from church. The Corporal and his wife could not speak to their charges, but they got along very well by means of a sign-manual.

After the Eskimos saw the Corporal brush his teeth, they took a toothbrush he had used for putting paste on his shoes, cleaned it, and used it for their own teeth. When they had seen him shave, they found one of his old razors, sharpened it with a file, and shaved themselves. They took little bones from their soup and carved tiny fish, now in the possession of Mrs. Conibear of Fort Smith. The tendency of Eskimos to pattern after the white man is illustrated by a ceremonial costume worn among them, which with its buttons at the back and its coat-tails is supposed to be copied from full-dress clothes the Eskimos saw on Sir John Franklin!

Since the pair of murderers escaped death after all, it may be thought the long pursuit to bring them to justice was not worth while. But that is an entirely mistaken reckoning. The whole of the Mackenzie region—though it would take the story a long time to travel in a region without newspaper or telegraph—echoed to the percussions and repercussions of fact and rumor regarding the event. The Eskimos and the Indians in their own way followed the course of the pursuers and the proceedings, and when the net closed round the malefactors it was one more proof that the "men in the red coats" never fail to land the man they go for. It was of the utmost importance to the prestige and the authority of the constabulary throughout the Northwest Territories that Sinnisiak and

Uluksak should be brought in and placed on trial; it was not necessary to the moral effect that there should be an execution.

The expenditure of funds and of time, of man power and of dog power, was justified abundantly. The lesson taught by the two years of persistence has sunk in. By every such experience Indians, Eskimo, and white men, too, learn that the law of settled communities applies as surely in the wilderness as in "the busy haunts of men."

CHAPTER VIII

SLACK WATER

The author of "The Recessional" with his uncanny sapience and "remarkable rightness" has reminded his Western readers that we cannot hustle the East. At Fort Smith we who were faring north on the *Mackenzie River* were forcefully reminded that it is equally futile to attempt to accelerate the pace of the North. It was our unhappy fate after crossing the sixteen-mile portage from the connecting boat, the *Athabasca River,* to have to wait eleven days for the *Mackenzie River* to "get a move on" from that *entrepôt.*

The reasons for the delay are instructive to those who may contemplate establishing organizations for trade, or systems of transportation, in the Far North. That the Mackenzie is one day to be the route of a considerable tourist travel nobody with eyes in his head and the facts at his command can deny. That there is room for considerable improvement on the part of the Hudson's Bay Company in forwarding passengers and freight is equally unquestionable.

The horse-torturing bulldog fly, that makes portage hauling by horses practicable only in the sub-Arctic twilight that passes for night, was but one of the factors leading to the long hold-up, though he was a factor by no means the least important. The first and the greatest cause of trouble was antecedent to our coming.

The *Athabasca River,* which makes the run from Waterways on the Clearwater to Fitzgerald on the Slave, was not finished when spring warmth unlocked the rivers from the imprisoning ice and set boats, flowers, and flies simultaneously free. The contractors promised the boat for May 15th; it was delivered June 3d; the trial trip was made June 10th. The *Athabasca River* was built to supplant the exhausted veteran McMurray, whose melancholy ghost we had seen, high on a green island, as we came downstream. Our northward trip on the new boat was her second of the season; it should have been her third. Her three trips should have been completed in time to get the freight over the portage so as to permit of the sailing of the *Mackenzie River* on or about June 24th, instead of July 6th, when after eleven days of waiting we finally got away. There were two prospective brides aboard: we began to think it might be necessary to have their weddings without them.

Of course, no flat-bottomed boat like ours, drawing about three feet when loaded, and offering a large expanse of freeboard to wind and wave, dares to give battle to Great Slave Lake till the ice is out; but by the time we left Fort Smith the ice had been far from our lake course for over a fortnight, and little, strange craft had been lurching up to our sandy, semi-bay anchorage almost daily with tales of crossing the lake at the middle as well as at the western end where we were to make our way.

Though the *Athabasca River* had completed her maiden voyage ere we came aboard, she was not yet a ship that had found herself, and she still lacked many of the lesser appurtenances that make for a passenger's

convenience. She had made fast to the bank at Waterways amid the horde of mosquitoes on Monday evening, June 19th. The passengers from the Arctic Express came aboard on the following evening. The craft of a rival line—namely, the *Slave River,* of the Alberta and Arctic Transporation Company, which was to connect at the Fitzgerald-Fort Smith portage with the *Distributor*—was ready and waiting, and pulled out on the first lap of the route in the cool of the following morning. We did not get away till mid-afternoon of the next day, Thursday.

The small hardware for our boat had not arrived, and there were no handles on the doors. This matters little in the North Country, where there is something wrong with the man who closes his door. Colonel Cornwall, that doughty hunter of big game, shooter of rapids at home and Germans abroad, buried "Twelve Foot Davis" at Peace River with this epitaph: "He was everybody's friend, and he never was known to lock his cabin door." One did not seek to keep his own *bijouterie* and articles *de vertu* from the prying eyes of fellow passengers. A mean suspicion did not inspire the wish for privacy now and then. But after you had killed—or supposed you had killed—all the mosquitoes in your cabin, you wished to keep out the rest of the winged host, with their thin, piping trebles. Or perhaps you aspired—and perspired—for a bath. Few of us in a little while can so divest ourselves of foolish custom as not to sympathize with the lad of whom Elihu Vedder the artist tells in his reminiscences. Little Ikey was sitting on the beach with his father, and over their heads was a sign "Baths, Twenty-five Cents." "Ach, fader," was the small boy's plaintive

petition, "I wish I had a bath." The elder Ikey gazed upon his son, with paternal tenderness. "Ach, Ikey," he answered, "ven I vas your age, I vas just so romantic."

The saloon was innocent of the application of the paint-brush. The forepart, where the smoking-room was supposed to be, was for the nonce a carpenter-shop, productive of much conversation, blue smoke, and spruce and cedar shavings. From it there presently issued a screen and a shelf for my room, for which I was duly grateful; and I never want to meet pleasanter men than the two honest and amiable carpenters. But where were the contractors behind the carpenters—the men whose business it was to furnish things, in time to take advantage of a short, brisk forwarding season when fur-trader and prospector must

"fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run"?

Was it to this end that men had worked in the biting winter-tide on the roof of the warehouse, at 38° below—one boy freezing his nose five times—and the weekly train had been hauling supplies, on or off the track, all through the frigid season? Some men played the game out to the end with all they had to give to it—and some lived the easy life in cities and shrugged their shoulders and lit another cigarette and planned another strike. You cannot improvise a service after the season starts. You must prepare.

It began to seem as if the Company that had us in its care was willing to profit by everything except example. The object-lesson of the *Slave River* sliding out under our bows, for its connecting steamer the *Dis-*

tributor to have first call and first trade at all the posts to Aklavik in the middle of the Mackenzie delta, was received—as far as we could tell—with indifference. But let us strive, in matters of praise or blame, to be even-handed: let us not, to establish a point in contention, be unfair. It was urged in behalf of our own carriers that we had a mountain of freight to remove in comparison with their molehill. The new steamer of our company, the *Athabasca River,* has a cargo capacity of two hundred tons, and accommodations for fifty-eight passengers. We pushed a heavily laden scow. The *Distributor* of the rival line has a cargo capacity of two hundred and fifty tons and staterooms for eighty passengers. But when we left Fort Smith on the *Mackenzie River,* a smaller boat than the *Athabasca River,* we needed a power-boat and a scow to accommodate our overflow. Presumably the *Distributor* carried a good deal less than the freight that held us back, and by that fact—if it is a fact—their expedition in moving their cargo forward over the portage may be discounted in our favor.

The power-scow which we took along with us should have been allowed to take the laden scow and start off independently, as it did last season. Our delay was lengthened by the time taken to load the power-boat and the scow, and our lake and river navigation was seriously impeded and retarded by having to navigate for all three vessels lashed together in a flotilla, instead of merely for ourselves. At the eleventh hour two motor-boats were added for good measure. The excuse was given that the power-scow had no captain and would have to take out papers were she to operate independently. But there was Captain Mills at Fitz-

gerald, perfectly capable, and eating his heart out for employment; and there was the mate of the *Athabasca River,* possessed of a pilot's license. Captain Mills is unwilling to sail on Fridays, but he is willing to turn the hands of his watch back to Thursday or forward to Saturday in an emergency.

When we came to the portage, what did we find? At the very hour that we drew in at Fitzgerald, Sunday morning, June 25th, our rival the *Distributor* was starting from Fort Smith at the other end of the portage, sixteen miles away. It had reached Fitzgerald on Thursday. The company had a huge red touring-car in waiting for its passengers, and—what is more to the point—a powerful tractor, working night and day, at every trip hauling several wagonloads of freight, with a second tractor in reserve in case the first broke down.

Our company, letting the passengers fend for themselves as far as the transit was concerned, began what seemed an interminable process of getting its freight across. Apparently there was a deal of freight in transit that did not need to be taken on this first boat, which goes farthest north. There were said to be fifteen two-horse teams at work. Many more local teamsters were anxious to work, and were ignored in favor of an outside contractor. The importation of this man, with his fine, well-fed teams, seems to have been entirely justifiable. The Indians not merely starved and maltreated their teams, but became intolerably arrogant, thinking their monopoly of the traffic across the portage could not be challenged. These teams, because of the devilish and unremitting malignity of the bulldog flies, did their hauling at night

—a procedure not merely excusable, but commendably humane and even necessary. No one who has seen the horses in their torment would be willing to consign the poor beasts to such suffering as they must endure upon the road by day. Such nets and coverings as may be provided can offer but a slight alleviation of their misery. One sees the horses, after a trip—coming in red with blood, perhaps—released for rest, huddling to windward of smudge bonfires, or in default of these standing in a forlorn group together to get in one another's shade. They will stand in the road where the dust is thickest, and stamp in it as if to produce a counterfeit of smoke. Sometimes they fling themselves down in the dust, and wallow in it, finding a moment's surcease from torture by lying first on one side and then on the other, like the winter traveler in the open by his fire. No, one does not want harder work or a more uneasy respite for the horses of the portage. But more teams should have been put on, from the number of those idle and available, and the tractors of the rival company might have been employed when they had nothing to do.

One team hauls the load to the halfway point, eight miles; another takes it the rest of the way. There is a camp at the halfway point, where brisk little girls with their hair in pigtails sell soft drinks at a booth. When it rains, the first half of the road, from Fitzgerald, is turned to a liquid mud or "gumbo," profound and tenacious; then the tractor loses much of its advantage over the non-mechanical transport, though the load of the latter is cut in half, from two thousand to one thousand pounds. But during almost the entire eleven days of our waiting at Fort Smith, while our supply-boat the

Athabasca River went back to Waterways and brought down her third load, the skies were at their brightest and bluest and the roadway was in the best condition that the sandy, stoneless soil ever achieves. It might—but it evidently does not—occur to the Company that the road might be surfaced with some of the famous McMurray tar-sands that have done such excellent service as paving-material in Edmonton, outlasting adjoining pavement of other material. Or oil might be used as a top-dressing or binding, as is so commonly the usage elsewhere. Doubtless the traffic does not justify the construction of locks through the rapids that would do away entirely with the portage, or the construction of the railway, with easy grades, for which the Company obtained a charter at Ottawa a year ago. But it is a dog-in-the-manager policy to hold that charter and not use it, when it is understood that other companies stand ready to attempt to make a paying venture of a railway.

One night it blew, and it turned cold so that Father Manoz at the mission had his potatoes touched with frost. That blow delayed the *Athabasca River* by preventing an immediate crossing of Lake Athabasca. But it did not affect our transport problem, or prevent a small pile of boxes and bags and crated machinery from being placed on the bank at the head of our gang-plank each morning for our good-humored and willing boys (collegians, three of them) with their two-wheeled hand-trucks, and no derricks helping, to hustle aboard our somnolent craft.

It appears that in the general bungling a quantity of freight for Good Hope that could just as well go later was loaded aboard for this trip to the points farthest

north; and so, after the *Mackenzie River* was loaded and waiting, some of the freight was taken off in favor of goods and chattels brought by the *Athabasca River*.

The question naturally asked itself, if the competing company, with comparatively modest resources and its commercial success still in the making, could run a tractor to and fro in shifts, the twenty-four hours round, why could not we do the same? If the strain could be taken from the horses hauling through the sand, and put on the inanimate and unfeeling machine in the one case, what valid argument dealing with dust in the gears and bearings and oil-boxes could we offer? Of course it is a primitive region; of course there is glorious history behind those who cling to the medieval method; of course there is hero-stuff in the men who made and continue to make that history. But all these things are no good reason why the modern instrument at hand should not be adopted: it would save time, it would save money, it would save horses, it would save men. I choose to say nothing of the saving in wear-and-tear on the temper, and the nerve-frazzle of that negligible merchandise, the passenger. One who has been about the world at all is prepared to accept "ill or well, the cross, the crown, the rainbow or the thunder." Perhaps it is perfectly fair to make the passenger pay for berths and meals while day is added unto day of avoidable waiting; and the Company is the heaviest loser by the protracted delay. But the doctrine of waste motion—and waste emotion—teaches that men, instead of giving to themselves and to others the plausible excuses that abound whenever we seek them, owe it to the spirit of enterprise, enlightenment and modern progress "to strive, to seek,

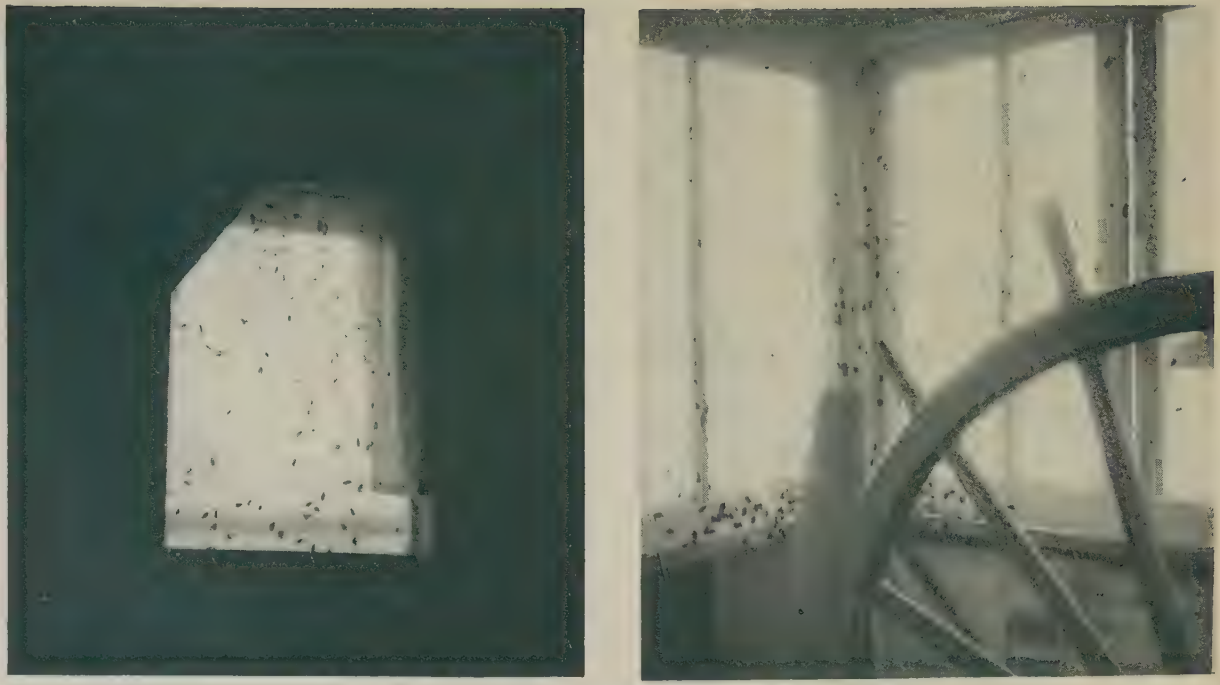
to find, and not to yield." For a great company with a magnificent tradition to fall down on the job so conspicuously and so completely is for civilization itself to fail.

An occurrence at Fort Resolution was so typical that it might be cited in this connection not inaptly. We had been there half an hour in the early morning when a boat was rowed out, over the space of several hundred feet separating us from the shore, to ask who we were, though it could have been no other boat. Then another skiff came to borrow a lard pail to bail out the scow that was to bring a small quantity of freight, including valuable furs. One man used the pail and three superintended him. When the scow was finally put in order, it brought out its contribution to the cargo. There were about twenty-five men aboard the scow, of whom two were casually poling, so that the scow turned round and round instead of going straight. It was then discovered that the bills of lading had been forgotten, and another trip ashore was made for these. By such dilatory methods, a stop that did not need to last more than an hour was expanded to five hours, though there were several good reasons for making haste.

Personal discomfort, in a northern journey, may be minimized. The slings and arrows of the outrageous insects are among the expected things. Moored at the bottom of a hot, sliding bank of sand one hundred feet high, radiant with the gathered heat of days of 90° and 91°, the boat itself—especially on the landward side where the cabins were breathless—was a living purgatory, or even an inferno, till night came. The minute the boat is under way, it is a miracle of

change, and one gives joyful thanks for it; but a long stop is horrid when you are on the ship—and you cannot forever be ashore exploring. Moreover, the summer woods are alive with the same winged torments that afflict every sequestered nook aboard the moored ship. You knew what the bulldog flies meant to the quivering flanks of the horses when you felt them on your own shins. For some of the men it became a stubbornly-waged contest between bulldog and Bull Durham. You had stout clothes: the poor beasts are virtually naked. Most of the time these flies jig and zizz harmlessly enough about a human trying to write or read; sometimes in a wind or a sufficient cold they go off the job and grant a blessed immunity.

They seem, in a general manner of speaking, to concede office-hours in the cool shade and after sundown (where the sun goes down) to the ubiquitous, iniquitous mosquito; and their preference is for the dazzling heat of the sun on white paint or gray sand where the atmosphere is lethargic and the voice of their own wings is loudest of all. They are very stupid creatures, and when they fall on their backs, as they often do, it takes them a long, twirling time to turn over and start off again. But when they do bite, they certainly leave no doubt of it. Their touch is as that of a coal of fire. They would startle the sleepiest of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus broad awake in an instant. They make the mosquito's lyric nip seem the airiest persiflage by contrast. I know of nothing so disruptive of the continuity of one's mental processes as the bite of a bulldog fly. Most of this is written with one's head in a pillar of cloud by day, the pillar composed of bulldog flies with the mosquitoes horning in when it is



Bulldog Flies

River Vistas

cool or shady anywhere, which may serve to account in part for any descriptive language that may seem splenetic or acidulous. Remove these insects—and one day they are bound to go—and a very ordinary philosophy of living will carry one cheerfully through the meanest and miserablest day imaginable in the Northland. The winter, after all, is the time when it is best worth while to be alive beyond the sixtieth parallel—the time when one's whole being is at its keenest edge to give battle to the flails of snow and frost in the wind. And if a day of summer has its detriments, it has its blessings, too, when there is light at eventide, and such a sundown is beheld as no man elsewhere sees.

Night after night the sun went down like God sitting on His throne, where there shall be no more night and no more sea. I ran the gamut of all that might be named under the generic designation of the *couleur de rose* and there was nothing near the prevalent hue of its glory. Carmine, magenta, burgundy, crimson, vermilion, and a dozen other names—none would serve. Sometimes at the heart of that garish and gaudy flower, the American Beauty rose, one finds the flash of a tint that might be compared with the hues of that opulent descent of the sub-Arctic sun. But round about the heart of a rose its petals can throw no such hues as those of our sundown skies. Looking at the ineffable sight, all petty annoyances fell away to nothingness.

You rebuked yourself for thinking of small things. You thought of the Gray Nuns tumbling about in their scow, as it was dashed and beaten from rock to rock in the anger of the Athabasca rapids. You thought of

the grand pioneer Mackenzie, his self-command, his quiet mind, when he started on his great adventure in these waters. Listen to his casual, offhand beginning: "We embarked at nine in the morning at Fort Chipewyan, on the South side of the Lake of the Hills, in latitude 58.40 North, and longitude 110.30 West from Greenwich, and compass has sixteen degrees variation East, in a canoe made of birch bark." No fuss here about bills of lading, invoices, and inventories. You get into a canoe, and take your paddle, and start off on an unknown river. "For my purpose holds to sail . . . beyond the baths of all the (Northern) stars until I die." There was a man for you and me: no quibbling tourist hesitating over a choice of socks, and wondering whether he wants marmalade or strawberry jam on his toast at breakfast.

"Give me a man who on this life's rough sea
Loves to have his sails filled with a lusty wind
Even till his sail-yards tremble, his masts crack,
And his rapt ship runs on her side so low
That her masts drink water, and her keel plows air:
There is no danger to a man who knows
What life and death is."

Or, for another cool and quieting hand on the fever of your "repining restlessness," you turn to "Maria Chapdelaine," and you read (William H. Blake translating): "The sun dipped toward the horizon, disappeared; the sky took on softer hues above the forest's dark edge, and the hour of supper brought to the house five men of the color of the soil." One thinks of William Ernest Henley's lines "Margaritæ Sorori" and their "sundown, splendid and serene—death."

Yes, here on the sanded roof of the boat behind the wheelhouse, with pale light on the river and the spruce-fringe all along the sky and a soft wind breathing, one cannot afford to take the little things for the large, to accept the worm's-eye instead of the bird's-eye view of the universe. A period of "still pond, no more moving" (to use the name of the childish pastime that we knew) has its uses to the soul: the creaking of the gulls, or the squealing of the laden scow as it rubs against our gunwale under my cabin-window is not without a meaning.

CHAPTER IX

"IS THY SERVANT A DOG?"

THE dogs of Fort Smith did their best to beguile the tedium of the interval of waiting. It is as hard to take a census of them as to count the Indians or sound Great Slave Lake. One moment there may be none at all on the wet beach sand. The next moment the cook throws stale bread or a motion-picture pie ashore and the dogs mobilize from everywhere. The "moccasin telegraph" has a branch line straight from their bush haunts to the cook's galley. Passengers may fail to hear the loud alarum of the dinner bell, but the dogs know by intuition when it is mealtime on shipboard. For themselves, ashore, it is always mealtime. No true husky knows how to say when. Like the steamship herself, when you think surely there has been an overloading there is still room.

"Slim" the deck hand said that when the steamship hove in sight you could hear the huskies cheering: "Eat your meat, eat your meat, Raw, Raw, Raw!"

Over the brow of the knoll from the alders and the aspens they tumble, helter-skelter, higgledy-piggledy down the sandy bank and even shoulder-deep into the muddy water. Some dogs are black as sin, some are grizzled like burnt toast, some are reddish brown or tawny as fire-brick, some are white as the polar bear.

The blackest somehow seem to have the shortest, ugliest tempers. The least quarrelsome seem to be the white ones. There is every mood or tense between to correspond with the shade.

There are dogs of well rounded contour, pampered by the boatmen and the passengers; there are lean starvelings who have crawled from the Indian teepees or been deserted until winter by their owners. Some, full of mettle and crackly dried white-fish, seem to need no pity: others touch the heart at once with their abject forlornness. There are dogs tall and agile, able to hurdle the mining and milling machinery, to vault clear of wire ropes and pick their way like mountain goats over the high-piled crates. Then there are ridiculous fuzzy pups whose mouths are always full of one another's shanks—irresponsible revelers, forever seeking to draw the big dogs into a quarrel, and trying out the gleaming whiteness of new teeth on scraps of lumber. If you wish to feed these little ones, it must be done close-up by hand. It will be no use to throw them tidbits from afar: the older, bigger brutes will brush them away as if they were so many flies, and get it all. How does a small husky ever manage to grow up? you wonder. If it depended on the other dogs, he never would get anything.

But the mother of three of these seems to recognize the family tie, even at an age when the dog-mothers of more sophisticated latitudes would scorn to own it. She is almost always with her young ones. When you pet them, she comes and thrusts her soft muzzle of inquiry into your hand, wagging her tail the while, curveting and fawning, to prove that she does not really mind, as long as you are gentle. She will not bite you

unless you bite her first. Curiously, the other dogs, generally wanting in every chivalric instinct, seem to respect the social status of a mother in dogdom. They will not stand aside to let her get choice morsels thrown from the steamer. But they seem to abstain from ferocious assaults that would wrench from her jaws what she has already seized—as with the other dogs. They do not pick a fight wth her as they would with some gay bachelor roaming the beach unvexed by family cares.

Her patience with the puppies is remarkable. They cling to her ears like burrs; they nip her hocks wherever she goes; her glossy flank as she tries to sleep is their preferred gymnasium. Sometimes when they are too outrageously boisterous she gives them a throaty reminder and a nip of remonstrance, and they give their squealing promise to be good, which they forget as soon as they have made it. She is one of those with whom you need not hesitate to put out your hand: with many of the rest of the dogs you cannot be too circumspect in your meetings and greetings. They may not mean to tear your hand with those long, sharp, cutting chisels that are the tools of their trade, but they think you may be holding out food, and it is a little too much to expect of them that they should perfectly discern between fish and fingers.

One of the dogs is blind. He comes as you call, but he needs to have the call repeated. He leans his head against your leg, and reciprocates the fondling. He seems unable to believe that instead of kicks and cuffs somebody cares to rub behind his ears. Evidently he has been whipped across the face by an Indian, so that one eye is just a blood-red circle about a curdled milky-

blue ball, looking hard as a small marble, and the other eye, though the iris is brown and soft, is rimmed with an opaque blue band.

To my gratification, a man came off one of the barges—he was husband of the strong-minded cook—with a granite-ware bucket of slops. "Ain't it a shame the way these Indians treats their dogs?" he spluttered. It was the twentieth time I had heard such a sentiment from the river-men. "This poor feller don't stand no chance with the rest.——Git away, youse!" He made a threatening gesture with a piece of scantling to a circling, bristling wolf-pack, evidently studying how they might "rush" him and his bucket and defraud the blind one of a meal. Then he sat down on a gummy spruce log, the bucket between his legs, and showed the blind dog where to put his head. In went the shoulders, too, till you feared that it might take a surgical operation with a pair of shears to rid this poor skeleton in armor of his headpiece.

Then one of the irrepressible pups jazzed up, ears cocked, his whole attitude asking: "Why can't I get in on this? What are all the rest of you standing back for? If there isn't room for another full-sized pair of jaws, can't you pry that big fellow loose from the edges, just enough to let my little bit of a face slip in?" Which is what the dog's Samaritan proceeded to do. The blind dog was reaching the point of saturation and surfeit, anyway. Visibly he filled and rounded as if some one were inflating a football inside him. It is a fair question whether he had once breathed since he began.

For a little while the puppy was on the anxious seat: like the boy watching the other boy eat the apple, he

must have feared that there wasn't "going to be no core." But now the poor sightless gourmand was extracted sufficiently to let the small one look for the leavings beside him—and to make sure of a hold the pup thrust in his right forepaw along with his nose.

Profound displeasure was written on the wrinkled faces of the dog outsiders, in a ring about the lucky dogs, like the Spanish galleons round the little *Revenge* in Tennyson's ballad. Nevertheless they gave an attentive hearing, while the pup—even after the big dog pulled out—went on luxuriously licking the bottom of the pail, and the benefactor told about the dogs that had just come to land with him.

"See that power-boat down there? The one with the tent in the stern, and the cow-shed aft, with the rusty stovepipe goin' crazy over the side? That's ours. Well, sir, we had some winter on Great Slave Lake, believe me! We were looking for gold on Caribou Island out in the middle of the lake. We sunk a shaft to forty-three feet, and now we're bringin' back samples to assay. Prospects is bright. The dogs certainly did help. You see, after you've played all the records again an' again, an' get tired o' lookin' at each other's faces, an' hearin' each other's stories, there's always the dogs. Dogs is restful, dogs is. You can shut 'em up or turn 'em on when you want to. They's more variety to 'em than there is to a good many human bein's. We had taken three cats to the island. Just like a deserted island in a book. It ain't right on this government map o' yours, and nobody knows just how long or how wide it is. Oh, yes—the cats sharpens their claws and fights off the dogs; the dogs dreads 'em and mos' always gives 'em a wide

berth. Well, we only had one dog—that big bull-terrier over yonder, worryin' that old shoe. Full o' pep, he is. Name's Rex. He came with his master in a Ford car all the way from Arizona to Edmonton. But he ain't got the kind o' winter coat these huskies has got. So I tell you he hugged the stove pretty tight all winter long. Spring came an' he limbered up. When some Indians mushed in after the ice was out, on the way to Fort Rae, they couldn't believe their eyes to see him stan' up on his hind legs and roll over when his master speaks to him. Their dogs haven't never done nothin' like that. Hadn't heard no call to.

"One dog ain't enough for eight men. But when the ice begin to melt, an' it was as rotten as a hollow log, there arrove one day from the mainland—thirty miles over the ice—the spittin' image of about the most misery I ever see in a dog's body. He was the walkin' shadow of a white birch tree. Rex's master has had a college education—minin' department of the University of Missouri—an' he says: 'He looks like a ghost. Le's call him Cæsar for Cæsar's ghost.' So we did. Gosh! when he first came in he couldn't do nothin' but lay down. We fed him awful slow an' tender, nearly on liquid nothin'. We sure thought he was some transparent. Wan't much to choose between him 'n' our mosquito-bars for looks or thickness. Man! you oughta ha' seen what come snoopin' in only about a week later. He wan't much more than the shed hairs of the precedin' animal. He'd a' been almos' too thin to write a letter home on. Don't see where he found room for his temper. First he wouldn't come nowhere near us. He'd jes' stan' like the kettle boilin' over on the stove, an' you could hear the steam

escapin'. He was huffin' up his shoulders same's a man trying on an overcoat. If ever a dog cussed, that one certainly wan't fit to repeat. His snarl would mos' go through your hand, ten feet away. But we kep' on throwin' meals into him, an' he come round somethin' surprisin'. There he is now. Come here, Rags! Come 'n' meet the gennleman."

Rags sniffed up amiably enough, sat on my foot and put his wet muzzle in my hand.

"White jus' like Cæsar, you see, inside an' out, an' got just about as much tar on him from the barge. Only he's smaller. But as for bein' a gennleman, in so far as a dog can be a gennleman, it's just about fifty-fifty between the two o' them. No, I can't say they exactly love, honor, an' obey the pussy-cats. But they don't never touch them, and, to the contrary notwithstandin', if any strange dogs comes fussin' round our floatin' ice-cream parlor they're likely to have to be sewed up some before they leave."

The "numerosity" of the dogs here—and at many other places on the river—puts one in mind of Uncle Rastus, haled before the judge on the charge that he was not providing for his family.

"And yet they tell me, 'Rastus," said the judge, in a terrible voice, "that you keep fourteen dogs around the house."

"Yes, but you' Honah," expostulated 'Rastus mildly, "I couldn' ask my family to eat dogs, you' Honah."

But here the case is inverted: the Indian feeds the family—as well as he can—and it is the dogs that go hungry. We do well to try to inculcate a more humane procedure—and yet is there not missionary work

of the same sort to be done in many a southern city where families close the house for the season and turn their so-called "pets" out to forage for themselves in back yards and alley-ways? Let us when we censure the Indian make sure our own house is in order, front and back.

I was sauntering from Conibear's store to the boat with a brown paper parcel of dried whitefish for the dogs under my arm. I did not look behind me. Presently I felt a gentle twitch at the package. It was like a small, diffident fish that, as the little boy in *Punch* said of his fish, didn't know how to hold on. I looked round, and of course it was a husky—one need not say a hungry husky—who shrank away. I fear it was useless to explain to him, as I did, that the fish was designed as a supper-party for "Mink" and his friends at the boat.

"Mink" pleased me much. He was one of the polar-bear kind of dogs. He was aged, and his teeth were comparatively stumpy, but the remains of pancakes and the insides of hot buns do not need much mastication. He camped in the middle of the gangplank and had to be displaced to put freight aboard; in the darker hours that for form's sake we named "night," he lay in the dust at the end of the plank where the freight was thrown off the wagons. But he never dared to come down the plank beyond a certain row of nail-heads: the boat to him was a dim, inscrutable mystery. The only thing he was sure of about the boat was that it was filled with food, and that no passenger went ashore unless his pockets were crammed with edibles to be handed out if only you followed at heel long enough. But "Mink's" breath and faith generally gave out half-

way up the hill; as a rule he left me at the mosquito-haunted spring, disappointed that my pitcher carried so often to this well of living waters held nothing for him to eat. What was his joy, as he came up the hill with me one day, to meet "Fat," with a burlap sack of candy, coming down.

"Fat" was a tramp. In the United States we would call him a "bum," to differentiate him from the occasionally busy hobo and the always wandering tramp. The "bum," as is generally understood, just sets an' thinks or sometimes just sets. Fat's head was bare: his brain was almost so. His hair was of a color betwixt ginger and snuff, to match his open-throated "buckskin" shirt, and the eyes of vague and wandering baby blue were as ponds in the pink map of a countenance neither shaven nor unshorn, but in the half-way state of the cuticle of a gooseberry or a prickly pear, or the pins on the cylinder of a music-box. He smiled to the ears across teeth that were singularly white and even; he stood infirm and askew, like a melted candle, greasy and overflowing to the very shoes. I wondered at "Fat's" sudden rise to affluence.

"Why 'Fat,'" I asked point-blank, "how did you get so rich?" I knew he was hauled free to the sawmill where he did no work, and hauled back again on the same terms. Fat opened the sack, inserted a languid hand and fed "Mink" five molasses "Velvets," untwisting the paraffine paper from each, before he answered.

"Didn't have no money. Morie the Syrian gave 'em to me. I can eat two pounds a day. That's why I'm fat." Morie was a robust young cedar of Lebanon who sold sundaes for fifty cents, and otherwise in vari-

ous ways lost money, at a one-story skyscraper with burlap windows, and a sign:

WE DO NOT WELCOME
THOSE WHO SPIT

"You see," "Fat" deigned to explain, "he was openin' a bar'l. The candy on top was wet. I asked him what he'd take for 'em. He said I could have 'em for carryin' 'em away. I sure am glad I was there on time, an' had the bright idee to ask him what he'd take for 'em."

He trudged off, sack over shoulder, and the turncoat "Mink" at his heel. But after all, "Mink" was only a dog—and a perpetually hungry dog at that.

It was the consensus of opinion, including his own, that "Fat" preferred the horizontal. How quickly, in a frontier community, people take your name and number, your height and fighting-weight! The last three may not be what you think they are. "Fat" was a famous daydreamer. Some thought his happiest achievement was when he yawned and said, "Been a-wonderin' if a fur-farm would pay better on a island in Slave Lake or in Athabasca." But I consider his most brilliant feat was to ask me, "What do you consider the fare to be from Fort Smith to Philadelphia?" His weight, he told me, was 203, lying on his back at the stern of the scow. He fished for the dogs, sinking somebody else's bag of flour in the water first, to encourage the fish to come round. "Fat" is still young—somewhere in the reclining twenties, I imagine—and one may safely predict for him conspicuous success in his chosen profession of panhandler, even though it is admittedly a somewhat overcrowded vocation.

But to return—if not to our muttons—to our dogs. I wished a body could pass along the deck of our steamship as it hugged the bank—a form of philandering we often indulged in to take on wood as well as freight—without alternately raising and dashing the hopes of such vast crowds of hungry dogs. It is pitiful to see them spring to attention and stand motionless, ears up, so long—and so often in vain. You cannot spend all the time feeding dogs. You have to be writing, or packing, or talking to people, or reading a book, or doing some other stupid and tiresome thing for which a dog has no use. How kind it was of Maida and the rest of the four-footed entourage at Abbotsford to let "The Magician of the North" write so many books! Had his North been on the Mackenzie, I wonder if he would have found the time. He would surely have capitulated to the spell of these wild, willful, impulsive, affectionate, gentle, greedy, murderous dogs.

The "husky" dog inherits many traits of craft and cunning from his ancestor the wolf. The wolf is among the brainiest of beasts. A savant of the North told me of a timber-wolf he tried to poison. It wouldn't touch his strychnine, no matter how carefully camouflaged. A piece of beef was prepared as a lure. No hand touched the meat: the incision was opened and closed with an ax. But the wolf bit out from the meat the part containing the poison and put it aside. The wolf will turn a trap over without springing it. He will, as my informant expressed it, "skiddoo zigzag" to elude a gun he descries held in the hand of a man in a vehicle. When not observed, he follows straight: as soon as he is watched, he resumes his zigzag, pre-

cisely like the ships that steered an erratic course to avoid the German submarines.

But you cannot go up and down the river, if you have a beating heart in you, and not feel for the dogs and feed them. You cannot keep them out of what you may be writing—for they are a part of every inhabited landscape. When Max O'Rell declared that he hated an "anonymous" landscape he probably meant a dog-less one.

As you looked at the hungry, wistful crowd of dogs, you murmured to yourself, "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?" If you appeared with a camera in your hand, or took out a notebook, they thought it was food, and were so disappointed to find it wasn't. "Even the dogs may eat of the crumbs that fall from the master's table." The Indians deserve to hear and should be made to apply many a sermon on that text, or—as the Reverend Mr. Crisall suggested—on the text, "a living dog is better than a dead lion."

It is said the dogs refuse mink. One man assured me as I threw a fried egg that the dog would not eat it. The shot went awry and the egg landed on the dog's nose. As it fell off he put his paw on it to keep the other dogs away, and gulped it whole.

I do wish that moulting black-bear bully with the shaggy coat, a hundred per cent ruffian, would not set such a fierce, frenetic example, and terrorize the rest of the dogs at Fort Smith. His evil communications tend to corrupt the good manners of them all. It is reassuring to know that some of the beasts that are most beastly in summer are among the ablest and most willing sled performers in the winter-tide. And some

of the lesser breeds without the law—looking as if they had been crudely sculptured from the tar-sands, or hewn from old red sandstone—eating anything, sleeping anywhere, are faithful unto death in the traces, going to the right at "you," to the left at "cha," and straight on at "mush," or even answering like the oxen to "gee" and "haw," as willingly as their brethren of the Labrador answer to "ouk, ouk" and "urrah, urrah," or the Newfoundland tykes respond to "keep off" and "hold in." They'd a heap rather tug till they drop, and carry bleeding feet—when they can't get their tiny moccasins—through the snow, than snap in the hot drowse of summer at bulldog flies. It's all very well for David Harum to say that a few fleas are good for a dog, 'cause they keep him from broodin' too much on bein' a dog. But these poor beasties, like the horses, have done nothing to deserve such keen and continuous misery as the clouds of insects or the whips of the Indians inflict. I have seen some of the saddest faces in the world turned up to me by the dogs of the Mackenzie, and in them was the ancient riddle of the universe—the riddle of the why of pain and torment, for humans as well as for hounds.

Think what a life of bruisings and butt-end larrupings is theirs, at Indian hands, with a constant emptiness where good fuel ought to be—and then ask yourself what these faithful, humble servitors have done to earn such treatment. They deserve the best that can be done for them. It has been proved repeatedly that dogs can be driven kindly and still with discipline and firmness. They do not condemn the driver who is eminently fair. They like to be talked to. They like to be told. To widen acquaintance among them is to deepen

admiration for the best properties of their complex character. Of course "dogs is dogs" as "pigs is pigs." We cannot expect these brothers and sisters of the wolves to behave like Bishop Grouard or Bishop Breynat or Bishop Lucas. The bishops themselves, who love their "little horses," know what to expect of them, as of their Indian protégés. They are unwilling to call either dogs or Indians the "children of the devil." The Indians and their dogs are souls to be saved together.

CHAPTER X

THE TIGHT COLLAR

EVERYTHING had happened that could happen, and "Slim" Peterson was mad clean through at the wilderness country. He wanted to go back where crowds went up and down and the bright lights were burning. His heart was eaten out of him by the worst kind of loneliness—that which is born of being too much with the same small knot of men. He could not take it out of them, and so his quarrel was with all the inanimate scenery, which he had learned to hate from the bottom of his soul, if the spirit left in him amounted to a soul. If he laid an ax to a tree, he did it with a savage satisfaction—the forest was a hostile army, like the Huns, and when the tree fell then a small part died like a man, out of the landscape which he hated so vindictively.

As a mad sovereign desired that the people might have a single throat for him to choke, so "Slim" wished he could scoop up the interminable waterways and throw them back at Heaven, or take the forest in one armful and hurl it into the furnaces of hell. Toward his fellows he was morose, irascible; he went about his work in the big trees, cutting and hauling, so sullenly, so silently, that the others gave up trying to get along with him, and let him have his taciturn and solitary way. In a camp that sorely needed good cheer, and

would have welcomed the spice of variety above all other groceries, he was a wet blanket, a kill-joy, a drag and a clog that the rest of them wished away.

It was not so when "Slim" first came. He was fairly merry then. He never was uproarious—but he was sufficiently good-natured to do: it was indeed a far cry from his début to the anti-social being he became. "Slim" signed on for the job of a lumber-jack because he was sick, like Huckleberry Finn, of being civilized. He was sick of the rut of convention, the strait-jacket of routine: he liked the saying, "a groove is a grave," and told himself it was true. So he kicked over the traces of respectable conformity, and took to the woods with an outfit of seasoned "sour-doughs," wearing the clothes they wore and dividing the high cost and the tough chewing of their grub-stake.

That was disgust number one—the food. Never by any chance could the fool of a cook make anything taste like the same thing cooked at home. He seemed to have no tool in his trade but the frying-pan. His bread was heavy and dense as a raw potato; his beef was rancid, stringy, fit for dogs; his pies were anæmic and his puddings sorrowful. The coffee was an insult to the name, and condensed milk could not apologize for it. A meal was an affair not to be enjoyed, but to be shoved into your face and put down as though it were a bitter pill: it was merely an ordeal to be endured.

The wit that is the sauce to meat was absent. The talk ran on makes of motor-cars, on tobacco, on cards, on the day's work, on what the Company ought to do and didn't for its workmen, on what they would do when they got away, on low amours. The twist was

ever toward the lewd and vulgar; the same old, stale profanities were repeated in the same old way; a gutter-snipe argot filled the air, and if a man tried to raise the level of the talk he was howled down as a high-brow. So he subsided in his own thoughts, and others, with the dollar bills on the boards before them playing for stakes they couldn't afford, let him be buried in his own life as they lived theirs.

There was long rain, and the camp was a quagmire—a slough of despond for the refined one in particular, as he nursed the many bruises of body and of soul. They lit match after match, and smoked one bad smoke after another, and the slap of cards and the ring of oaths was unceasing till the close space was filled with the stubs of cigarettes and the burnt matches. They smoked some ineffable brand of street sweepings that seemed nothing like tobacco—doubtless there was heavy dope in it. They didn't even hold the cigarette as if they meant it—it lopped out of their faces and made their words obscure. To go to bed was only less dolorous than to eat one's corned-beef and dried-apple dinner: they put down cards and villainous hootch so constantly and so hard that sleep hovered afar and might not come near till the first rift of day appeared, like a gray nun carrying roses.

The soggy, sultry stickiness that came after every rain, the warm humidity, brought out mosquitoes and flies, in clouds that were as a single mouth gaping for a man's blood. The men slapped and scratched till they were weary. Of course there were mosquito-bars and head-nets. But some were worn out, and some were lost; and half the time if it was not too much trouble to adjust the protection then it seemed so.

When there was moving from point to point by canoe, there were long and dreadful portages, when you were Atlas, and no matter where you put the burden you carried it rubbed an open wound, it dug into a pet sore spot. It never was comfortable. Sometimes the overladen canoe must be "tracked" alongshore. Then all hands were vociferous as they toiled at the ropes, and always with the preface of an oath.

"Men wa'n't never meant to haul their guts out like horses 'n' dogs," they cried out to the burning, pitiless sun.

Hell heard its name used many times, but sent no aid.

"Slim" was fiercely charged with pulling less than his part, and he hotly flung a denial.

"Aw, shut your head!" was the retort. "You big stiff! You great big hunk o' cheese!" And worse than that, much worse.

And once the whole load of a canoe was drowned in rapids and "Slim's" camera therewith—likewise a few books, and a picture of a girl, and a toilet outfit that made the others call him a sissy, and a lot of the inconsiderable "things that a fellow cares about," which, "Slim" told himself, he should never have taken into the wilds with him. These gone, a last tie with the civilized life was snapped, and in that hour began the acute manifestation of the temper of an embittered and disillusioned human bear.

Then, when snow came, what happened to his feet made things worse still at the opposite end of his tall, spare frame. Namely—his first hard experience with snowshoes skinned his toes, and though he stuck it out like a novice undergoing the cruelest form of penance,

he could not tell even himself how keen was the anguish of each step he took. The blood percolated through three pairs of socks and his moccasins. The midday sun melted the snow, and when it froze again the thongs hardened with it, and bit—it felt to him—into the very bone, as they froze down into the moccasin; and under the small of the foot the balls of ice were always forming. Nobody had told him beforehand about the pain of snowshoes—he had seen pictures of the pleasure of them, that seemed near to the joy of flying. Even girls he knew, or heard of, had done well with them. He nearly broke his neck, and wrenched his leg, and when he stayed abed a while with the aftermath of the experience the rest charitably said that he was shamming. . . .

Was this ball-and-chain life what he was meant for? It was worse than any penal servitude he could conceive. As he boiled the remains of the cheesecloth from his mosquito-bar and wound it round an ax-wound in his foot he told himself he would end it all. No—not by suicide. That was far from his thoughts. He would go to the world again, abandon the shirt open at the throat, and the moccasins, and get his alimentary canal in order, and take the lid from the fleshpots and taste of them all.

He planned the first dinner he would have. There would be cream of tomato soup. That would be followed by chicken à la king. There would be plenty of asparagus, with toast and melted butter. At the close would be Neapolitan ice-cream, and coffee—genuine coffee. He would tip the waiter too much and go to the best show in town afterward. He would forget big trees, and flies, and dirt—the dirt of men's minds espe-

cially. Then after a little rest he would accept office-employment—"accept" was the word he used—and wear clothes that would let himself look in the glass with some satisfaction.

When he said good-by, the regrets of his camp-mates were concealed so well that you might think there were no regrets at all. Could you have heard the chorus that went up when he was rid of the camp, you would have been left in doubt no longer. The expletives, to save space, are deleted, and that leaves very little of what they actually said.

"Didya ever see such a poor fish?"

"I'll say he was the prize boob."

"What did the soreheaded old crab ever come for, anyway?"

One of the consenting chorus tapped his skull significantly. "Nobody at home. Roof all in ruins. Cinders on the skylight an' bats in the belfry."

"He sure was some nut," said the cook, with the final verdict of the foreman of the jury.

When "Slim" got back to the city, he walked on air for a week, and played like mad, and dressed like a florist's window. He told himself repeatedly that he was very happy.

But at the end of a week—he ceased to believe it.

Who invented shoes, that bind the toes, and telegraph the pavement from your heels to the top of your cranium?

Who thought out garters to pinch the shanks, and suspenders to rub your shoulders, and shirts stiff with starch, and trousers over-narrow round the waist, and the whole miserable category of style?

The summation of discomfort, the apex of sartorial

slavery, was attained in the stiff collar, that dealt a mortal blow at human freedom. He might learn in time to endure everything else. He did not believe he could stand that again. It was the symbol of the confinement that had been so irksome to him when first he took to the woods. On the eighth day after the railway brought him back to town he ran to his hall bedroom, ripped the tight collar from his neck, donned the old open-throated blue flannel shirt he wore when he was a lumber-jack, and sat in a basket-bottomed chair gazing into the cracked mirror, thinking hard.

The lumber-camp three days later could not believe its eyes and had to take a second look, when "Slim" trudged into camp with a monstrous pack on his shoulders, smiling all over.

"The Boss says I can come back," he told them. "I came to my senses when I got out there. I'm sorry I was such a jackass."

"No hard feelin's, 'Slim,' old boy," said the cook, as he put out his hand. From that instant dates "Slim's" cure.

CHAPTER XI

MID-CHANNEL

We started from Fort Smith at seven-thirty on the evening of July 6th, and in an hour made nearly ten miles, of which four were due to the current. Then we tied up at the right bank to bail out the smaller of the two motor boats, which for the last four miles had been dragged along almost wholly submerged. A fresh breeze blew, and the larger boat cavorting beside it splashed so hard that the smaller vessel was all but drowned and one of its gas-tanks floated away.

Alexander Mackenzie in his first day after leaving our starting-point below the rapids covered seventy-two miles in his birch-bark canoe filled with people and provisions. One of the passengers, as we stood watching the waves from one motor-boat fill the other, started in to depreciate Mackenzie's journey, and I ventured to quote to him the figures.

In the stern of the scow a forlorn little Indian dog was the sole passenger. The stop to bail out the boat gave a fine chance to fill him with soda biscuits, and a fish discovered in the swamped boat. Meanwhile an Indian girl with her head stuck out of a forward port-hole, like a figurehead awry, wheedled away on a mouth-organ. She wore as if it were a brooch a small yellow kitten with a red ribbon about its neck. She could hardly have been a Chipewyan. They hate yellow. It is no use for the storekeepers at Chipewyan

to try to sell them anything yellow. The Dog Rib Indians at Fort Rae, on the north arm of Great Slave Lake, on the other hand, are enamored of yellow. All Indians want pink or cerise. Mackenzie mentions some who were averse to blue. Any one who attempts Indian trade knows very well that the brightest silks and worsteds must be selected, and their likes and dislikes are pronounced.

The motor-boats were separated, as if they were dogs that had quarreled, and placed on opposite sides of the parental ship. The oil-barrels were brought from the prow to the stern of the power-boat, so that she could keep her nose above the waves more successfully in her next scuffle with rough water.

"I wish I could find me a gunny-sack for that dog," remarked the sailor known as "Slim." "I'd give him my coat but I'm afraid I'll be needing it to-night."

However, the dog was all but smiling over his fish dinner. He was not so symmetrical as he had been: there was a suspicious bulge amidships where his stomach had so long been idle. He had taken on his cargo, and presently he curled up at the edge of the canvas over the scow's load, with the silver flakes of fish-scales round him as evidence that he had sumptuously fed.

At four next morning the boat woke, made steam, and threshed her way mistily downstream two miles and tied up in mud at a long fresh-cut woodpile the color of canned salmon, reached at six o'clock. There were bright little crimson spots on the mosquito-screen where you rested your hand heavily on the insects that gazed too long at the view through your cabin window. Here as at other halting-places the clutter of impedimenta round our bows, making us a river-hen with far

too many chickens, necessitated a good deal of finesse to get at the bank: it was more than an hour ere the chute was rigged to slide the wood aboard and the first log came slithering down the chute to be relayed to the pit-brink in the crowded engine-room.

The structure of that woodpile was worth noting. It was built by a man named Martin—best at the job, they said, of all wood-cutters on the river. He did his work in the lonely wintertide and went away, leaving the redolent logs to be his monument. They were sawed true, in four-foot lengths, and piled right, in a double row fifty feet long with logs driven in as uprights at each end to keep the pile from falling down, and cross-sticks neatly on top at the corners to keep them square. He did not need to cut so accurately, to build so cunningly, in order to get his four dollars a cord. He came alone with a hand-sled—not even with dogs—and drew the fallen timbers unaided, and worked here and at four other points all winter long for his few hundred dollars far from men, or any passer-by, or the sound of a cheerful settlement. Now the boats of the Company must stop and pay tribute where he has marked one in every few logs "H. B. C.," black on the pink end, and put up a sign "H. B. Co., Wood." He is not here to collect, but the money will be sent him.

What says that famous passage of Emerson, so often misquoted? It is in his "Journals," Volume VIII, page 528: "If a man has good corn, or wood, or boards, or pigs to sell, or can make better chairs or knives, crucibles or church organs, than anybody else, you will find a broad hard-beaten road to his house, though it be in the woods." (Nothing said about mousetraps, as in the version usually heard.)

in him, and approved. He justified his reputation for coolness and precaution by the way he handled our boats. A man little given to polite prattle with the passengers, but affable as well as sufficiently firm-handed with the crew, he preferred safety to brilliancy, and caution to mileage. Even though the sands of time were sinking, and our various errands spurred some of us with an imported, alien urgency to get ahead, we had to admit the captain was sagacious, and right side up with care was a better policy than wind-jamming, if this meant firm lodgment on a sandbar, or some fracture or rupture amidships.

On the first trip of the *Distributor,* of the rival line, in 1921, there was a comedy of errors that might easily have been a tragedy. The captain, brought in with heraldry from British Columbia, dismissed impatiently the proffer of a pilot. O no, the lordly Mackenzie was nothing but a trout-brook, or the equivalent thereof. He could read the river at sight—he needed no counsel at the wheel. So he mounted to the pilot-house and the trouble started. To begin with, he had no idea of the location of the woodpiles belonging to his company. To steal another steamboat's wood is as much of an offense as to purloin another's furs or food. Wood is what the boat eats. His passage down the river was considerably delayed by his visits to various clearings on the bank, only to find that they bore a Hudson's Bay sign, and he couldn't rob the pile.

When he brought his boat at last into the Lake, he had mislaid his first port of call—he couldn't find it anywhere. He put his head into the smoking end of the saloon where a poker game was in full blast, to ask, "Any gentleman here know where Fort Resolution is?"

Much against his will, an official interpreter, who had been up and down the river, went with him to the pilot-house, and in twenty minutes the shallow roadstead before the settlement was entered, and Fort Resolution was back on the map once more.

Though the bold mariner was bringing freight for Hay River, he decided to omit that anxiously expectant post, and drop in there on his return. Then the problem was to find the mouth of the Mackenzie. The interpreter pleaded with him to avoid a certain formidable little archipelago of rocks, some of which barely peeped above the treacherous water. But the *soi-disant* navigator refused to heed the adviser he had summoned. The interpreter went below, so as not to be in the pilot-house when the crash came.

It came. The boat was fast on a rock for twenty-eight hours. Then with the aid of "dead men" she was pulled off. That sounds rather startling. A "dead man" is a pole driven into the bed of the lake or stream, to which block and tackle may be affixed for the purpose of hauling off the stranded vessel. Under any name, they called in the aid of any part of the scenery they could lay hold of. To the very last, the boat refused to budge—and then suddenly it slid off into deep water.

The crowd—for the boat was filled this oil-rush year—was landed at Fort Norman for the oil-well. On the return journey, of twelve passengers who came aboard, eight disembarked at Fort Simpson to wait for another boat. When he should have gone to Hay River this captain hit the Buffalo River instead, and had to go back twenty-two miles. Inspector Matthews—a careful man—would not let such an incompe-

tent skipper make another trip alone. The *Distributor* had been advertised to make ten trips in the season between Fort Smith and Fort Norman—eight days for each trip. She made but three.

Not till ten in the morning did the wind abate sufficiently to permit us to go on. The full moon rose like a lump of the dough used for fishing over the side. The opposite brim of the sky was afire with sundown, and between, as Rossetti would say, the "clouds were long, like fishes swimming," and pink from the glory of the west. Do the Indians, I wonder, derive their fondness for pink from seeing so much of it in their heavens at the birth and the death of so many days? At a quarter before two we halted at the only sawmill for hundreds of miles to get twenty spruce planks, twenty feet long, precious to somebody, in the cool of the first earliness of a beautiful bright blue morning. But our enemy the head-wind was rising betimes. We came away at half past two. About eight o'clock, as we sat at breakfast, the boat made up her mind that the wind was too much for her, and with the woodpile still two miles ahead turned about and cuddled up lovingly to the bank out of the main channel, under ruined black poplar trees, about eighty miles downstream from Fort Smith. The black poplar is a poor, pithless sort of tree. It does not cut well, for lack of stamina, and it is wanting in goodness as fuel. But these trees served a useful purpose: they gave shelter to our two Indian women, with the boy who owned the lean, unhappy dog, and the little girl with the yellow kitten, who seized the chance to take their shawls and pipes ashore and sit on the grass. They care for boats almost as little as they care for beds. First they built a lively red fire—the Indian

is most punctilious to put out his camp-fires when they have served his turn. The boy would have left his dog to howl aboard the scow had some one not told him to give the animal the same taste of freedom his little master enjoyed. There was no danger that the animal would wander; he hovered doubtfully about the fringes of their breakfast, wagging his tail. But the Indians did not heed him. The boat-people had fed him well.

The kitten was better treated. The little girl put its head in a bowl for scraps of the meat and dough the family party carried for themselves. The old lady placidly sat on spruce boughs on the ground, working on moccasins, and amiably showed me the porcupine-quills dyed red and blue which she was using to adorn her foot-gear. At the rail stood Louis Mercredi. His ancestor was a Macready. That name was turned by a French priest into Mercredi. Louis has left the forest ways far behind him, and considers himself a white man.

Who is white, and who is Indian, here? If you "take treaty—that is, if you accept $5 a year and a supply of rations from the Government for your aboriginal right to the land—your status as an Indian is determined. If you have taken land-scrip or money-scrip—that is, if you have accepted 240 acres or $240 from the Government—your status as a "breed" is legally fixed. But in 1922 the practice of giving land was abolished in favor of a money payment. Shyster lawyers and others had been taking the land from the "breeds" for a bottle of whisky or other nominal value, and it was to end the scandalous practices that it was decided to pay cash. The $240 is paid once for all, and the influx of so much

money at a time has been too much for the moral equilibrium of some "millionaires for a day." The gradings and shadings between red man and white man are quite as inscrutable as those between the negro and the Caucasian. In the Northwest, "white man" is an extremely elastic term.

I took a pair of "plus 2¼" glasses, a fish-hook, a blue glass necklace, worth ten cents, with enticing dingle-dangles, and a small sack of Bull Durham tobacco, and with Louis Mercredi as interpreter crossed on a teetering plank from the boat-rail to the Indian camp-fire and squatted down in the family circle. The younger of the women tried on the glasses and was greatly pleased to find she could now see much better to sew and to put the dyed porcupine quills round the foot-holes in the moccasins—as nice a task as to insert the purfling in the edge of a violin. She said she had besought Bishop Breynat to send her a pair but they had never come.

The little girl, who was slightly deaf, was quietly glad of the blue necklace, which matched the blue sweater-jacket she was wearing. She said *"merci"* in a low tone as I clasped it about her neck, and her mother—the woman with the glasses—told her to say "thank you" to the white man, whereupon she murmured *"merci"* again. The boy, who was the son of the older woman, went to work immediately with his fishhook in the muddy water, the girl's mother cutting off a length of line for him from a thick coil she carried in her wicker suitcase. The boy's mother toted her worldly belongings in a big bag of caribou-skin, well-worn, the fur side out. Both women stowed the

tobacco away carefully in large bandanas for their future delectation; their pipes were already full of their own pet brand of weed.

The glasses aided the sight of the older woman, too, and one could imagine that in days to come they would be changing eyes as the three old women of the ancient fairy-tale passed the one tooth they owned from hand to hand among them. I wished that I had two pairs.

"If I were rich," said the younger, who looked fifty, "I would make you something nice. But I have nothing to make it of."

"Tell me a story instead," I answered.

"My mother told me stories when I was little," she said. "But I was not well, and I could not remember them. Now, a woman grown, I am of those who sit by the fire, and sew, and smoke. The men are those who go out in the world and hunt and have the adventures, and know the stories. When you get to Fort Resolution you will meet them and hear them talk. But last winter I went out myself and snared a thousand rabbits in the snow."

Then the elder—a full-blood Slave Indian, innocent of English—put in, "I know a woman of Fitzgerald who has a skirt made all of rabbit-skins."

That made the little girl laugh. To think that any one should be so old-fashioned as to wear a skirt of rabbit-skins, when there were store clothes of manufactured prints!

"Not because they needed to," the old lady removed her pipe to explain, "but because it is warm and comfortable. But in these times they do not make things as they used to do. You must go far, far down the

river to the North. There they still wear undergarments of the rabbit-skin. Here, it is so much easier to go to the store and buy the material."

The younger woman was a half-breed, and her father was a Scotchman named Simpson. She talked English, but preferred Chipewyan. She told me that she had had eleven children, of whom four were dead and seven were living.

"You say you think you would like to be an Indian," she said, slowly, fixing on me deep and mournful eyes. When she smiled, it was a wise and kindly crinkling, with genuine goodness and amiability in the creases. "It is hard for a poor widow to bring up eleven children in the open, in the woods and snows. When I was a girl, the land was covered with caribou, moose, geese, and duck. Now one must go far to get them, and when one takes them to the store the price of all that one sees is so high!"

All day the wind ruffled the stream in our teeth and at times the ruffle became a long-sweeping, white-crested roller comparable with the sea's waves. Captain Morton did exactly right to hold us where we were, in the sheltered lee of the land. He could not without risk have done otherwise. The boat alone could have gone on, undoubtedly. But it could not manage for itself and the four helpless craft beside it. Noah's problem with the Ark was comparatively simple: at least he had everything and everybody under the same roof. It was not of the Captain's volition that the oil-burning power-scow was merely lashed alongside as so much dead weight to be carried, instead of helping. Nor did he complain to the passengers of the incubus. He merely went about his work at all times to the best of

his ability, and when he slept I know not, nor did any one know.

Not till five o'clock the next morning (Sunday, July 9th) could we safely venture from our shelter in quest of the woodpile. We tried up to the bank at half-past seven, and were away again at half-past eight. Near by, at a tiny tent, was the man—Martin—who had made the woodpile, and as he stood on the bank watching us go off and we waved him farewell I thought of him as one of those whose satisfaction is in more than money. He knows that his work feeds engines, and enables commerce to continue, and men to travel. He stands and sees the shrinkage of the woodpile that he laid so cunningly, knowing that by this shrinkage steam is made, and the volume of the commerce of the world expands.

The danger of the mind of a man growing in upon itself, till he thinks mainly of the next meal or the next woodpile, was shown in the talk of one of the group in the men's end of the long saloon. Knowing that for twenty years he had been in orders as a minister, I hinted that to some of us some simple form of Sunday morning service might be acceptable. He said bluntly, "I don't think anybody wants it." Then irresolutely he added, "Give me a text." Evidently he expected me to decline the challenge.

I said, "You might take the first words of the first chapter of John: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.' "

"That is a wonderful verse," he said. "Do you know the Greek text? Have you ever read the New Testament in the original?"

"Parts of it."

"*Logos* means word. Word in the intellectual sense.

The word was with God. Why should ministers say anything? What's the use of preaching? Don't the works of God speak for themselves? There's the flower, now. It lives its life. It praises God in its own way. Look at the dogs. I've seen some dogs that are better than some men. It seems presumption for a man to stand up in the pulpit and lay down the law to his fellow mortals in a congregation. What does he know that they don't know? Why should he lift up his voice? I don't suppose"—he included the listening circle in a triumphant survey—"that there's a man on the boat who has a copy of the Bible."

The rifle expert, Mr. Morris, spoke up quietly but decisively. "I have a copy of the Bible with me that my mother gave me, and I read a chapter in it every day." This took the wind out of the sails of the speaker for a moment.

But he quickly regained confidence in his own crabbed and disputatious ego and proceeded.

"A man once got up in a church in Toronto and stalked out while I was preaching," he said. "I admired him for that. I must have talked a lot of rot. I don't blame him a bit."

I thought to myself—and I hope I did not look it: "You're a queer kind of clergyman. You're talking like this because you think most of those present will agree with you, and deride the Church which the vows you took pledged you to defend. But you're not getting anywhere with this kind of talk."

As he went on scoffing at the Christian ministry of which he had been a part for two decades, I thought of J. L. Garvin's wise words, "He who is bitter is beaten."

This man was bitter—and he was railing. He had no idea of a modern church, its plan and its service. His concepts were built on what churches used to be, when theologians filled the air with brimstone and consigned dissenters wholesale to perdition. What one could tell him of a different sort of work and worship was news to him. He was probably too old, too thickset in his ways and views, to change much or even to listen receptively.

The questions he asked were asked not for information but for inflammation. Each was a shaft designed to pierce below the cuticle and to deal a wound that should rankle with any who might cling to a simple faith and believe that deeds count for more than words.

He said, "The Catholics are doing a big, fine work. Why should the Protestants butt in? Why not let 'em do it?"

I said: "It is big and fine. Every Protestant ought to take off his hat to such folk as the bishops, priests, and nuns who came here to build up what we see to-day. It's not a question of denomination or of creed. But when you see a man carrying a load too big for him to handle, it isn't playing the game to say, "Oh, well—let George do it if he likes it!' It's our business to put our shoulders under the load, too. We Protestants ought to be ashamed to let the Catholics do so much better and so much more than we are doing to tame the wilderness and help the few people there are. We can—and we should—work side by side with them,

'And melt not in an acid sect
The Christian pearl of charity.' "

Said the obdurate ex-clergyman, reverting on the trail, "What's the use of ministers, when no two men agree?"

"Do you mean to say that we ought to do nothing, because we are not sure of the outcome?" I answered. There was a benign Catholic physician present, and I turned to him and reminded him of a passage in Dr. Osler's "Aequanimitas." "You remember, sir, that Dr. Osler points out how the patient is helped—or set back—by the bedside manner of the doctor. The doctor may come in with a buoyant confidence beaming in his aspect. His very bearing seems to say, 'Of course I can get you well. Just put your hand in mine and I'll take you through the Valley of the Shadow.' But if he looks doubtful and anxious, as much as to say, 'I never saw a case like this before, and I cannot diagnose it,' then the patient feels like turning his face to the wall and giving up the ghost. If you see a man bleeding to death before you, you stop the wound with whatever you have at hand."

"Yes," said the doctor, a man of wholly different ideas from those of the disillusioned clergyman, with years of devoted service behind his sparing utterances. "I remember in the war a man who was wounded in the groin, at the right side. A comrade picked up a stone, and held it where the blood was spurting, and saved him. It's all very well to say, 'There should have been a doctor present, and he should have had a wad of absorbent cotton.' But there wasn't any doctor, and there wasn't any absorbent cotton. They did the best they could with what they had, and the man got well. Of course a physician with implements and anæsthetics at hand would have felt he had no business

to use a foreign body that might have been the means of introducing infectious germs into the system. But in this world you have to do what you can with what you have."

That doctor's brief speech was worth more than all the rest of the debate. Here was a real man, a graduate of McGill in medicine, who chose to cast in his lot with the Catholic Mission at Fort Smith, and roomed three doors away from his up-to-date operating table. I saw his room. It held the minimum of creature comfort: almost its only decoration was the crucifix upon the wall.

"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself."

This man went as he was called, and wore no face of long-suffering martyrdom. There had come into his face that "Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." It had come from day linked with day in

"simple service, simply given
To his own kind in their human need."

The average ship captain complains of barnacles or —in southern waters—the teredo worm, but what is to be said of two laden scows and two motor-boats as parasites clinging like leeches to a flat-bottomed logging-camp like our *Mackenzie River?* Many a master mariner might balk when asked to take such an agglomeration down a twisting river full of bars and shallows and then across a lake about as big as Huron, famous for sudden squalls, and almost uncharted. There are no lighthouses or other aids to navigation;

there is no wireless to summon assistance; there is no assistance to be summoned. Captain Morton and Pilot MacPherson, the rugged half-breed, knew what responsibility was theirs: they were hardly to be pried loose from the wheel to sleep or eat.

You think you see a sure sign of human toil or habitation—and lo! it is a tree or a rock in some freakish guise or fantastic attitude. You might imagine against the bank an Indian "pinnace" or "pirogue"—the names used to fascinate me in my boyhood reading of explorers and buccaneers—and instead it is an old gray log. It is hard to believe that ice could so ravage the banks, and so viciously cut into the black strata of frozen mud under the overhanging spruces. I admired more than ever the prehensile activities of the crew as we drew near the lake, at the last place in the Slave River delta where it was possible to get four-foot spruce logs to burn. Here the boat for a time dropped the power-scow from the port side, that we might approach the bank to feed at the woodpile. But, back and fill as we might among the snags, we could not get within thirty feet of the bank. So one of the motor-boats was brought round from the other side of the steamer, and put between the steamer and the bank. Then the gangplank was laid across it. To the gangplank the chute was run from the top of the bank. Then there was a processional of wood carriers to and fro, burdened like sweatered ants. The Indian who laid the piles—you could see his teepee poles—had hewn them roughly and stacked the logs far from the bank. The logs could not be slid down the chute—they had to be carried all the way, and the chute, hardly wider than one's feet side by side, was extremely teetery and tem-

erarious. But it was the finest exercise to walk down with a log on each shoulder, and a cloud of bulldog flies debating whether to sting your head or the other wood. Why do tired clubmen of the cities pay $100 a week to be man-handled and keel-hauled at a sanitarium by retired prize-fighters? Let them come here and rustle logs with a crew of college boys. That will turn fat into muscle, and give them sleep o' nights, and make them eat like huskies.

At the bottom of the delta, beyond the snags and shifting sand-bars, you could see the waves of the open lake running and dancing like wet fire, so the powers above in the pilot-house decreed that we should tie to alders at the edge of a green swamp of mosquitoes, level as a putting-green.

"What hath night to do with sleep?" is the motto of the crew of Milton's "Comus," and it might as well be the motto of the crew of a Mackenzie steamer. Long after the stars were trying to shine against the sundown you might hear the soft tootle of "Slim," the night watchman, fingering his B-flat clarinet. I am sure there were some of the passengers who never left their game of fan-tan or poker at all. Among the sleepless were the Indian women, hooded like sibyls with their shawls, and smoking, down where the boiler warmed its own asbestos jacket and theirs.

At four-forty in the morning we tried for the lake again, but it was still rough, and we turned into a sheltering cove till seven-thirty. Then we crept out over the bar, hidden by mustard-yellow water. Unhappily, the ink on a chart drives: it cannot remain fluid. While you were putting down one place for the sandbank, the fight of the river rushing at the lake and the lake charging

back at the river would remold the contours under the surface, so that your chart overnight would be hopelessly falsified. The only hope is in those wise watchmen at the wheel, smoking their pipes with the tight lips of Swiss guides on the mouthpieces. They must know as if it were legible print the face of the water, with an unteachable intuition for squalls and storms and even for the dead hand of a snag that might reach up from below and try to claw the bottom boards away. It was sometimes discouraging to wake and find, like Mark Twain traveling by glacier, that we had not gained on the scenery in the night. But later—if not at the time—we knew why the boat refused to budge.

If Athabasca is the Lake of the Hills, then Great Slave is the Lake of Mirages. You can descry almost any kind of land or cliff or berg you wish, wherever you look. We ran as smoothly as a sewing-machine for three hours to Fort Resolution, reached at ten-thirty. The village spread out along the bay makes a brave showing, with its conspicuous Roman Catholic Mission buildings, its dominant spired church in the middle of the settlement, its red-roofed Mounted Police house at the other wing. There is no harbor; there is nothing like a wharf in the open roadstead. We nosed as near the stony beach as we dared, and cast anchor a hundred yards away.

I had in a canoe the garbage-can with the accumulation of three days and a half for the dogs. It was the conspiracy of the two kind stewardesses and the cook that made the savory banquet possible for the famished animals. We found when we landed that while we were held up in the stream the waters of the lake had been swept so violently landward here that for five

days the people had not been able to go out to draw their nets; the fish rotted; the people and the dogs suffered together.

No sooner had I dumped the swill on the beach than a swarm of dogs, mobilizing from everywhere, was a mass of jowls, flanks, and bushy tails upon it. It made one think of Masefield's picture of the hounds, in "Reynard the Fox":

> "A sea of moving heads and sterns,
> And tails all crumpled up like ferns."

My theory as to the relative goodness of white dogs compared with black ones was dashed by the excessive bullying rowdyism of a giant white dog, roughest and toughest of the lot. The Indians swarmed, too, to behold Mr. Morris's fine gun-play, and in the presence of the interested swarthy ranks he bestowed on five chiefs most beautiful amber-stemmed pipes in leather cases, which they accepted in solemn silence. Their composure, however, gave way to ejaculations of astonishment and delight as his bullets blew thrown potatoes and tin cans to atoms. There were many tents on the shore, as this was the time of treaty payments, and the red men had been waiting some days for their money, even as the white men had been waiting for their "permits"—the small consignment of strong drink allowed to each of them—a mischievous and even nefarious procedure on the part of the Government, and the poorest way of achieving political popularity.

Two hours later some of the dogs were still turning up the stones where the flies had settled, and nosing and licking the place where the remains of our food had been. They left nothing but bits of orange peel, which

no dog will eat. One thought of Greeley returning from the Arctic on the rescue ship, and his sad face as he looked over the side and beheld the cascade of slops from the cook's galley. "If we had only had that stuff," he said, "our men need not have died." The North is a grand place to Hooverize, and one is forced again to rueful meditation upon the waste at the back door that—since the war-strain was lifted—we have too generally renewed. If you would realize what food means, come where every pound that is not meat or fish must be imported. If you want butter and sugar to taste for their full strength and sweetness, come where they are luxuries, and a newcomer aboard the vessel smiles at the sight of them, even as refugees coming from Russia into Finland kissed the buttered bread ere they devoured it.

On the shore as a visible reminder of what the storm can do was a Mr. Murdock's yacht, which had cost him $2500, high and dry with its nine-ton lead keel and hardwood hull. It has been on the rocks since the fall, when the waves threw it there. During the storm that had let up just in time to permit of our approach, a schooner off shore was half buried by the waves that leaped twelve feet high as they raced and raged to the rocky beach.

The mission proudly exhibits a vegetable garden, and the barns are a tribute again to the courage and persistence of the priests and Gray Nuns who minister here. An interesting personality is Mr. Hornsby, who has presented to the University of Alberta a collection of Northern curios. He was bringing more from Great Bear Lake when a storm sent his treasure-trove and all his records to the bottom—a real tragedy.

Said this intrepid solitary voyager and bird-wise one, "In three years, as a rule, a single man in this region goes crazy or marries a squaw—I am the only man here that hasn't done either."

We unloaded what freight we had for this place, and pulled out at one o'clock for the run across the western end of the lake to Hay River. No skipper cares to "hang around" Resolution any longer than he has to. He knows what the lake may do to him in the open roadstead, and what a tempest may grow in a surprisingly short time from a cloud no bigger than a man's hand.

The change from the drug-store chocolate of the shallows to the cool green of the depths is refreshing. In the cabin washstands the spigots gush with a white stream instead of mud. We are blest indeed in this calm crossing, when we reflect on the fate of passengers held up for many days by the roused anger of this now placid expanse. Our rival the *Distributor* that was so fleet to outrun us a fortnight ago, we learned at Resolution, took "arms against a sea of troubles" as soon as she left that roadstead. The wind came up, the waves arose in their might; she barely made the lee of an islet and there she tossed for two days, observed from the shore, before she dared renew the journey.

Our run to Hay River from Resolution is eighty miles, and it takes all the wood we have to do it. How that firebox devours the logs! There is no speed indicator in the engine-room at the other end of the vessel, but if more exact knowledge is wanted than the guess that we are doing "eight to ten knots," we can throw out the log and derive the information by dead reckoning.

The stoker closes the door every time he throws in a log. That prevents the sudden cooling that may impose an added strain on the boiler. On the *Athabasca River* the door was left open till the firing was over. Probably there is little advantage in closing the door each time. The stoker's hands, encased in thick hide gloves, often feel the hot breath of the flames; they even seem to bathe in them, especially when he puts in his hands to straighten a log, instead of using his iron-pipe poker. As fast as he puts on a log, willing hands thrust another toward him over the pit-brink. Big timbers and little are alike to him: by long practice he has learned to minimize the effort of opening the door and popping in the huge sticks. Every now and then there is a black poplar (balm of Gilead) log amid the spruce timbers. It looks as good as spruce. But it is an arrant fraud, and it is sternly rejected, and will be thrown overboard when there is a lull. There is no woodpile between the river-mouth we left and a spot about a mile up the Hay River from the settlement.

One veteran bard of the river, "Joe" Hodgson, has been stirred to song in describing the efforts of the boatmen to feed the steamer fires all these years. Here is his effusion:

At the Woodpile

"The Boss shed his coat and he looked mighty bold,
As he donned his tan gloves and his shirt sleeves he rolled.
The billets flew upwards, they fell and they rolled
With a crash, and the dust was a sight to behold.

"An example like that was bound others to win,
So into the fray sprang our friend mighty Tim.

Dressed for a School Commencement Play, Fort Providence

Nuns at Fort Providence

Hay River Landing

And it did our hearts good, 'midst the din and the row,
To see them earn bread by the sweat of their brow.

"The next caught my eye was our friend Mr. Bloom,
And the wood flew before him like dust from a broom;
All nude to the waist, for his shirt he had shed;
And he heaved with a vim, like a man who sees red.

"By his side, steaming, restless, was Peace River George,
And he strove in the fray like a second St. George:
The play of his muscles showed him a true blade:
He was the attraction of matron and maid.

"I looked for the Captain, but alas and alack,
He lay with sick headache full prone on his back,
But like brave Horatius he held to the bridge,
While his words sounded ominously like sacrilege.

"You ask me my part in the play of the giants,
Alas! aged limbs are not muscled nor pliant;
So I sat in the shade as becomes a true poet,
If you doubted before reading this, you surely now know it."

Here at Hay River is a heartening example of the work of the Protestant communion, the Anglican Church. Mr. and Mrs. Vale have in their care fifty-two children, of whom a graduating class of sixteen—six girls and ten boys—came with us on our further journey, with Mrs. Vale to shepherd them. They are among the best-mannered and best-natured children I have seen. Some had been separated from their parents for three or four years, and among them were Eskimos going as far as the village of Aklavik in the delta.

Mr. Vale has a "faculty" of five. There is the equipment of a well ordered school in southern climes, where it does not take a year or more to get spare parts of speech. In the cellar of the main mission building are furnaces and a generator for acetylene. A windmill supplies running water, hot and cold. Dining room, kitchen, laundry, and sleeping quarters take up much of the main building. On the second floor are the two dormitories, for the boys and the girls. It was eleven at night when we visited the place, and they popped out of bed like rabbits from their burrows. Docile as they were, you could not blame them for being agog with excitement; for the sixteen who were leaving, the raucous whistle of the steamboat was really the chief feature of their commencement exercises. The walls of the schoolroom were covered with excellent drawings in black and white and in color, and with displays of penmanship.

Those children of a larger growth, the Indians, needed reassurance from Mr. Vale when Halley's comet neared the earth. Some believed that it was only by Bishop Breynat's intervention that the world was spared. They did not know whether it was worth while to sow wheat or not. But the comet came—and went—and Mr. Vale assured them that they were now safe for another three quarters of a century.

The Mission garden, fenced in against dogs who would pry up even the turnips and devour them with keenest relish, is a remarkable exhibit. If there is anything that can be raised in this latitude, Mr. Vale manages somehow to bring it to fruition. He is able to produce even tomatoes. One year they got ninety pounds of these succulent vegetables. They raise cel-

ery thirty-six inches high, and rhubarb whose leaves are bigger than an elephant's ears. Among the flowers are not merely the hardy Iceland poppy but the lilac and the wallflower. The soil is a rich black loam like that of Alberta. In the woods wild orchids are discoverable.

We went a mile upstream at midnight to load wood for our rapacious fires. We were at the woodpile until three-twenty, and the experience of stacking the logs below convinced me again that the pay of $45 a month for the stokers and $40 for the deck hands is not nearly enough for such work. The men were not grumbling. Instead—as we felt our way upstream—they sang to the ukulele. So that, although we have not yet heard Canadian boatmen singing at the oars, we are developing our own glee club, after all. "Lena from Palestina" appeared to be a favorite, a ballad hitherto unfamiliar to me.

> "She was fat, but she got leaner,
> Pushing on her concertina."

The breeze was with us, and it rained red sparks on the deck in the soft moonlight till it was necessary to get out the hose and give the upper works of the boat a drenching.

The woodpile was on the bank at our right (that is to say, the left bank of the stream), as we came to where the stream forked in two narrow channels that embraced an island. It was curious how much jockeying it took before one could get near enough to the bank to run the chute ashore. For three hours and a half the wood came cascading down. We took on what the lumberjacks would call "a good jag." The river

scene was of unbelievable fairyland beauty. The moon was at the full, and threw a silver path over the glassy water, which had a slight odor of decay due, perhaps, to the presence of a weed in the river. There are rapids a short distance above. The banks of the main stream and of the island showed first a soft grassy zone at the water's edge, then a band of willows, then, as if on an upper terrace, tall poplars and spruces. The glades and intervals might have been made by the art of a landscape gardener: it was easy to fancy this the private park of a nobleman on an English river.

Some thirty-five miles up the river are the Alexandra Falls. The upper fall is eighty-five feet high and the lower (a mile distant) fifty-five feet, the upper fall rivaling in contour the famous Niagara. If these Alexandra Falls were not tucked away in such a remote niche, they would be a tourist lode-stone. Twelve miles upstream from the post are fresh borings undertaken by the Pure Oil Company, under the hopeful Dr. O'Neill (an excellent geologist), with machinery transferred from the abandoned drilling of the Imperial Oil Company at Windy Point across the lake. Theodore Link, geologist of the Imperial Oil Company, was at or near the Alexandra Falls, prospecting.

The passengers who had gone ashore at Hay River waited until half past four for the boat to return from the woodpile, and the ship's company—except for the bright influx of the sixteen children—was a rather fagged and seedy outfit the next day (Tuesday, July 11th). But we were all exhilarated by the gleaming green water of a smooth run in the sunlight across the lake end and through the vast maw of the Mackenzie to Fort Providence. The run to Providence took

about eight hours. There were over a score of the tents of the Indians, surrounded by bristling dogs. They had come for "treaty." The most delightful exhibit of the hamlet was the group of polite little boys of the R. C. Mission who assembled on the bank to see the boat come in, and always rose and doffed their caps courteously to the salutation of a passenger. It was in the church here that the murder trial of Le Beaux—whose execution I have described—took place last year, with the Supreme Court justices of Alberta sitting. The Mission garden in addition to vegetables produces many kinds of old-fashioned flowers. But the good Father bemoaned the heavy rains that had given his agriculture a backward season. A group of a dozen Indian dogs made a dead set for me here, but the Indians called them off.

Southwest of Providence, perhaps at the source of the Beaver River, is a small tribe of Indians so averse to Christianity that, if Robin Adair Brooke of Edmonton is to be believed, they put a visiting priest in a canoe and told him to go home. Not many miles farther in the same direction, according to Mr. Brooke, in 1921 a lake was discovered that is larger than Little Slave Lake. Islands beyond Fort Providence diversify and embellish the splendid breadth of the green stream ere it expands in Little Lake—which at home we should consider a pretty big one. In the distance, to the northwest, is the dim blue rampart of the Horn Mountains, much like the hill ranges of Newfoundland.

The coming aboard of the sixteen Indian and Eskimo children quite changed the complexion of our shipboard existence. Thirteen were Indians, and three were Eskimos—two boys and a girl. "Their table manners are

better than those of some of the other passengers," observed one of the stewardesses, after their first meal. The ten boys were generally to be found in a group at the prow. They smiled, and took off their caps, gave you a genial greeting, and were thankful for everything done for them. Not one had been on a railway train, but they had seen the aëroplanes of the Imperial Oil Company at the time of the Fort Norman flight in 1921. One of the boys before that epic event had made a workable model of a plane from a magazine illustration.

The Indian children would have to learn the Loucheux language over again, almost from the start. In an absence from home lasting from two to seven years they had so changed that their parents were sure to be astonished. The cynic outsider always says they will revert utterly to type, relapse into barbarism, and live their lives out at the parental ground-level, discarding utterly the strait-jacket of convention forced on their childhood and artificial to their mode of thinking as to their ancestral tradition. But the demonstrable results do not bear out this statement so commonly heard.

The two Eskimo boys go to Aklavik, and the little girl is bound for Herschel Island, in Beaufort Sea in the Arctic, west of the Mackenzie delta. The rest of the children are Loucheux Indians, in the main. The Eskimo lads are extremely bright and affable: their smiles are contagious. They would not take a prize at a beauty show, but their faces are radiant of pleasant wholesomeness and cheery courage. The little Eskimo girl is demure, and delicate in appearance, but she is actually much more robust than she looks, and has a good record for health.

When the children smile, as they so often do, they show splendid sets of teeth. The girls braid their long black hair carefully; it is very different from the unkempt "ravelings" they bring to the mission. They are the pink of neatness and propriety, and ready to laugh at anything. One of them has been selected to marry a man she has never seen—a widower with several children—but she says she will not marry him unless she likes him. The mission-educated girls are in brisk demand as wives.

The boys are full of "pep" and fond of playing ball; but aboard the boat they are not scuffling gamins, snatching one another's caps, and rough-housing to the annoyance of the passengers. They are so happy to be on the boat that they care little about the hardness of the deck-boards. Several are under canvas on the scows, rejoicing in the pretense that these are their teepees. They are all excellent material for Boy Scouts.

Mr. Vale is careful to give free rein to their right impulses and the racial traits and aptitudes on which they must depend for a livelihood. He provides them with 22-caliber rifles and lets them go shooting; he lets them snare rabbits and put out nets and traps, so that they do not go back spoiled by their education for the life they are to lead. One woman recently wrote a grateful letter, saying how pleased she was with her son and the way he snared rabbits and shot ptarmigan for her.

The children of the mission pupils reveal a marked superiority over the others, showing the clear gain to their parents from the training. One mission-trained mother, who had bathed her baby daily in civilized fashion, as she had learned to do at Hay River, wrote

when the little girl was big enough to be sent to the school that she was "greedy for her yet" and could not quite make up her mind to part with her daughter.

Not all the native children submit willingly to school routine. At the Stony Reserve between Calgary and Banff the superintendent was accustomed to hear a clatter and see a cloud of dust, and find it was a cayuse bolting off with several of his young charges clinging to the mane and to one another, homeward-bound. From the Red Deer Reserve below Edmonton one tiny boy walked along the railroad a hundred miles to his home.

At twenty minutes of four on the morning of July 12th, as we were nearing Fort Simpson, we met the *Distributor* stemming the vigorous current upstream. The sun was rising, and it was just after one rainstorm and before the beginning of another. A double rainbow spanned the sky opposite the sun, and the semicircle was filled with an answering glow of pink. The inner rainbow was divided into many spectral bands which to the southward would be invisible or seen but dimly. The *Distributor* had a passenger for us, the industrious and affable Inspector Romanet of the Hudson's Bay Company, who had thought to catch us at Providence and was unable to get that far. As the boat nosed toward us the first time, the interval across the swiftly running water was too wide for him to leap; they tried a second time and he made it.

He brought a murder story. The elements of it were these, as the *Distributor* passengers detailed it to him. On April 2nd a young Eskimo, Aleck Omiak ("Omiak" in Eskimo means "boat"), shot and killed Corporal Doak, of the Mounted Police, and the Hudson's Bay agent, Binder, at Tree River. The Eskimo's uncle had

killed several Eskimos, and the young man had been given to understand that he must kill his uncle or suffer the consequences. He put his relative out of the way. Then it occurred to him that if he shot the Mounted Police Corporal so as merely to wound him, the latter would kill him. So he fired at the Corporal's legs, while the latter was lying asleep. The bullet glanced upward and struck the Corporal in a vital spot. Then, with a blurred idea of covering up his deed, the Eskimo fired again and shot Binder through the heart. He might have shot Kirk, also of the Hudson's Bay post, but the latter was away fishing. The culprit since the killing has been manacled at night, and he seems to betray no marked degree of concern over his fate.

Tree River is on Coronation Gulf, near the places where Inspector La Nauze and his party took the murderers in 1915. It may be that the leniency shown to those two Eskimos has had a bad effect.

One of the little Loucheux Indian boys on our boat when he heard of the affair said, "Those huskies are always running around shooting somebody." But one of the Eskimo lads replied: "Some of the huskies"—he did not hesitate to use the term—"live so far from everybody that they never have heard of God."

The little boat of the Northern Trading Company —the *Northland Trader*—brought in during the six hours of our stay a strange story of confiscation that did no credit to the *Distributor* and her captain. We were told that the *Distributor* crew robbed our wood-pile at Good Hope. We consume three quarters of a cord per hour; the *Distributor* needs two cords. The wood for our rival company's vessel had not been cut, and they took what they wanted. To rob a boat of her

fuel is a crime, in the North, like robbing a man of his food. Moreover, the captain of the *Distributor* is said to have hit the Hudson's Bay agent over the head with a billet of his own wood. The *Distributor* has left men to cut wood for this season and the next, but somebody, apparently, ought to be cracking stones for many more than two seasons if the facts are as represented.

Fort Simpson has a commanding situation atop of a bluff at the junction of the Liard with the greater river. For forty-five miles below the meeting-point the current runs at a rate of from four to six miles an hour, with a channel varying in depth from twenty-four to eighty feet. For more than a hundred and fifty miles the original stream and the contributory river are distinguishable—if the Liard is to be considered the contributory instead of the main stream. The muddy Liard is at the left; the clear water of the Mackenzie, pouring out of the vast reaches of Great Slave Lake, keeps to the right.

The Anglican Mission at Simpson—a church, a storehouse, a dwelling—is closed, and only the sundial is at work in the picketed enclosure where the weeds and long grass are rampant at their unchecked will. The Bible lies on the pulpit in the locked church unopened—you can look in through the windows, some of which are of plain-colored glass. The house is furnished, and the storm door is papered with illustrations from the *Graphic* and the *Sphere*. I ate ripe gooseberries and saw much mint in the yard. Everything waits, in good condition, for an incumbent. Before the summer's end, the Reverend Mr. Clarke will come here from Fort Norman; next year a medical

missionary from the Argentine seaboard takes his place.

There seem to be Indians up the Liard who need genuinely civilizing and Christianizing influences. The Indians who had come in to take treaty, and who pitched their teepees along the beach, feel that they have a grievance in the presence of too many white men in their country. There were sinister tales afloat, some circumstantial. A Mr. MacLeod, from Fort Liard, came to welcome his son, who was one of our Hay River children returning home. Two of Mr. MacLeod's brothers and a man with them were killed, and their skeletons were found, but the murderer has not been apprehended. A Mr. Thorgenson was supposedly another victim of the Indians. You could hear what you would of men who started up the river from this point and were not seen again. One man whom I met—R. G. Frizzell of Winnipeg—had come by canoe 860 miles from Waterways, in a month, with two young men twenty-two years old, and a black-and-white bird-dog (retriever) named "Partner," who sometimes jumped overboard and swam with the canoe. When they heard these grisly stories, the young men fell victim to the malady commonly known as "cold feet." They quit at Fort Simpson, and Mr. Frizzell has had to pay their fare out by way of the *Distributor* and send for two new men, seasoned prospectors. He loses virtually his whole summer by the enforced delay, and will have to winter in the country. One local resident named Lierre, who has been extremely active in building shacks in the open and staking claims, has a bad name for getting young fellows to come in and help him, and then quarreling with

them and sending them away; after which he possesses himself of the outfit they brought in.

Potatoes grow here luxuriantly, and the purple-topped fox-grass (a pest) is everywhere—almost as exquisite to behold as the tracts of the purple fireweed in Newfoundland. Imported food costs like sin. To the whites the price of a sack of sugar (100 pounds) is $50. Flour is $20 per hundredweight. The Indian pays a higher price, because he pays in trade. His flour costs him $24 per hundredweight.

The dogs brought in by the treaty Indians were in a terrible condition—the extreme of emaciation in many harrowing instances. They tried to eat the end of the stick with which the garbage from the boat was divided among them. So many were chained or tied in pairs that it was impossible to dump the food at a central location: it had to be carried from teepee to teepee. The ravenous animals often pulled their chains away or broke their ropes in the mad struggle—sometimes in a wild desire to get at the food, sometimes in terror. No dog-lover could contemplate their plight unmoved. This was the worst exhibition of dog-starvation on the river.

Mr. McDermott, managing the post at Fort Simpson, has performed a service in bringing together in his office the remnant of the library that was here when Agnes Deans Cameron came through in 1909. In her mendacious and interesting book she describes the deplorable condition of the library and the museum. The books were scattered about in disorder and the stuffed animals and birds were in shocking disrepair. Now the building that housed them—a warehouse, in which they occupied a loft—has disappeared. A

stuffed bear and a few birds are at Fort Smith; some furred animals went to live for a time in the store at Fitzgerald, atop of the shelves; finally, full of dust and shabby, a bonfire was made of the latter.

I was told that nobody cared about the remnant of the books at Fort Smith, and it was a pleasure to find that Mr. McDermott had taken pains to preserve them. There were about seven hundred volumes. Some of the historical books dated as far back as 1670. In the lot I noted twenty-four of the familiar Bohn's classics, sixteen volumes of "The Traveller's Library," Smithsonian Institute reports from 1858 to 1887, Grote's "History of Greece," Plutarch's Lives, Barth's "Central Africa," and similar books of travel, philosophy, and poetry, together with somewhat archaic works of fiction. I can imagine no greater enjoyment on a rainy day than to be turned loose to browse in such a library.

The river was as innocent as if it never stormed at Simpson, but my friend the valorous canoe-man told me that he waited within sight of the post for two days ere the rollers permitted him to land.

Between Fort Simpson and Wrigley, while still more than fifty miles distant, the North Nahanni range of the Mackenzie mountains ripples into view on the left bank. More than a dozen conspicuous rocky, treeless peaks, with lofty cliffs, are in sight. There is no snow on them in summer, but they seem to be not less than four thousand feet high, and their serrated or undulant silhouette, with the corrugated defiance of their cliffs from the river's placid expanse, is a welcome variegation after so much wooded lowland.

In the eleven o'clock sunset hush we came to a wide

bend of the river which pointed our boat directly toward the distant looming mountain-wall of blue, that seemed to bar further progress in that direction. The river was all but rippleless. The sky was ruffled and flaked with crimson, pink, and purple clouds, against a dazzling lemon-yellow background, and the striations were reflected in the smooth green water with the sharp-etched spruces so perfectly that the scene would have been the same had it been inverted. It brought the most indifferent passengers to their feet from the depths of their chairs, their reading, or their idle chat in the saloon: adjectives broke in pieces against the sight, and words seemed never so futile. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork." This one vista of the kingdom of heaven in the clouds was worth coming all the way to see. In fifteen minutes from the climax of the splendor every vestige of the fiery brilliancy had given place to a dull slaty blue for the clouds and for the mountains; the only red to be seen was that of the rain of our own sparks on the picture of the clouds in the water, and beyond them the reflection of the trees.

A few hours later, as one approached Wrigley, the noble range of the Franklin Mountains lorded it over the landscape on the right bank. It looks like the Presidential Range of the White Mountains of New Hampshire, but very much longer, with shreds of snow adhering to the highest parts in mid-July. All along this part of the river the beaches are firm with stones and gravel, offering suitable landing-places for canoes, instead of the black mud of the muskeg with grass and willows, found further south. The banks show steep slopes on ridges that run to a height of two hundred

feet or more, richly timbered with spruces. Some of the logs we burned in this region were fifteen inches in diameter and four feet in circumference.

Similar snow-patches on the mountain-tops were seen by Mackenzie at this point as he groped his way down the river on the morning of July 2, 1789.

"At nine we perceived a very high mountain ahead, which appeared on our nearer approach, to be rather a cluster of mountains, stretching as far as our view could reach to the Southward, and whose tops were lost in the clouds. At noon there was lightning, thunder, and rain, and at one, we came abreast of the mountains; their summits appeared to be barren and rocky, but their declivities were covered with wood; they appeared also to be sprinkled with white stones, which glistened in the sun, and were called by the Indians 'manetoe aseniah,' or spirit tones. I suspected that they were talc, though they possessed a more brilliant whiteness; on our return, however, these appearances were dissolved, as they were nothing more than patches of snow."

Mackenzie proceeded with caution at this place, expecting at any moment to come upon a fall; and it was easy for him as well as for his imaginative Indians to believe that they heard the roar of waters tumbling into an abyss.

It is all very well to say that the brave pioneer of 1789 had the constant help of the Indians, but those of one group could not aid him beyond the extent of their own knowledge or hearsay, and the best they could do was to pass him on to the next community of those whose knowledge had similar local limitations. Much of the time such advice and information as they

gave was calculated to be a deterrent to all but the hardiest spirits. It was of this stage of the journey that Mackenzie writes:

"The information which they gave respecting the river, had so much of the fabulous, that I shall not detail it: it will be sufficient just to mention their attempts to persuade us that it would require several winters to get to the sea, and the old age would come upon us before the period of our return: we were also to encounter monsters of such horrid shapes and destructive powers as could only exist in their wild imaginations. They added, besides, that there were two impassable falls in the river, the first of which was about thirty days' march from us.

"Though I placed no faith in these strange relations, they had a very different effect upon our Indians, who were already tired of the voyage. It was their opinion and anxious wish, that we should not hesitate to return. They said that, according to the information which they had received, there were very few animals in the country beyond us, and that as we proceeded, the scarcity would increase, and we should absolutely perish from hunger, if no other accident befell us. It was with no small trouble that they were convinced of the folly of these reasonings; and by my desire, they induced one of those Indians to accompany us, in consideration of a small kettle, an axe, a knife, and some other articles."

Going down this waterway in 1789, in a birch-bark canoe, not knowing what the next hour or the next bend might bring forth, was a very different matter from navigating the river in a stern-wheel steamer in 1922. It was the difference between paddling a laden canoe till the fagged muscles would obey the will no longer, and letting the strain fall on the machinery

while you sat on deck and praised the view. It was the difference between pitching one's tent in rain and wind, and snaring or netting one's own supper, and carrying one's comfortable house with one over the face of the waters, with a range to cook provisions bought at a store. It was the difference between a lodging on spruce boughs placed on the cold ground and a cabin with a mattress and springs beneath you.

We had an inspiriting example of the river aroused, and the consequent menace to navigation for any craft upon it, between Fort Wrigley and Simpson. Directly opposite Fort Wrigley a great face of rock rises from the stream for a thousand feet, or to a height of about 1150 feet above sea level. This rock forms one arm of a mile-long wooded amphitheater, with a similar bastion at the lower end; and behind the latter is a third looming promontory making an imposing massif visible afar. We had left it many miles behind us, and were about a mile from our evening woodpile, when a furious squall came up the river against the current, the banks of the river filling the air with dust as if it were spray from the stream, above the racing white caps and the waves that had so suddenly arisen in place of a surface as calm as an oil-tank only a few minutes before.

We put our nose ashore, against a long, shelterless stretch of pebbles below a burnt-over ridge. A rope was carried far up the bank, but there was nothing to tie to, and the man who had made the effort came aboard again with only a wetting for his pains. Then the paddle was kept churning, at eight or ten revolutions to the minute, to hold us against the strand in

lieu of cable or anchor. The wind blustered and howled about our free-board, but nobody was worried. Least of all did our schoolboys show concern. They went to their rest with the early birds, amid the freight: and as you stumbled in the dark you could not be quite sure whether an object under burlap was ham, or potatoes, or flour, or boy.

It was provoking to have to ride out the storm here when so short a distance away we might have been piling on wood. At one near-by woodpile, a deck hand told me, was a Pennsylvania citizen. Later I learned from the man himself that he was born in Pittsburgh, on the site of the Fort Pitt Hotel. His name was Jesse McCreery, and he arrived in 1921 to ply the saw and the ax between Fort Wrigley and Fort Norman.

The deck hand put it this way. "Jesse is raw-boned: he has no more fat on his body than a humming-bird. He has great big feet. He wears number twelves. He was twenty-five miles from the nearest post. He ran out of shoes, and so he made shoes of five mink-skins at ten dollars apiece. They wore out, and then he used marten skins at thirty-five dollars apiece. Somebody told him what the skins were worth, and said he ought not to waste them on his feet that way. 'Why,' they told him, 'y'r left foot's worth twenty dollars an' your right's worth thirty as they stand.' He said, 'I didn't know. I caught the little fellows running round the cabin.' "

It was a night of rain and fog, and the water's restlessness, and the power-scow at our side cried out in all her timbers, like a lost thing whimpering to be taken in out of the wet cold. But in the early morning of July 14th, Friday, we were able to move on to our

wood-pile, and after that when the sun broke through the gray we slid down the river as if on a greased plane, with lofty banks on the right and the distant Carcajou (or Gravel) Mountains of the Mackenzie range on the left, snow on the higher summits. On these mountains the sheep and goats are abundant. Last season a fire routed many of the animals from their congenial habitat, and Theodore Link the geologist saw many of the dispossessed crowding down to the lakes and rivers. At a turn of the river were blackened lumps of ice on the beach. As we neared Fort Norman we saw in the far distance a mountain-wall directly fronting us, with much snow, a good deal of which must have fallen in the cold, raw night preceding.

Just before reaching Fort Norman the black outcrop in the rocky right bank was visible where the coal still smolders that Mackenzie saw burning in 1789 and mistook for teepee fires. On our downward journey no smoke was seen, but when we returned a week later the upcurling smoke was plainly visible, and the wind brought a distinct odor. In winter flame appears. It was on his own return journey, August 2, 1789, that Mackenzie saw the burning coal. His words are:

"When we came to the river of the Bear Lake, I ordered one of the young Indians to wait for my canoe, and I took my place in their small canoe. This river is about 250 yards broad at this place. The water clear and of a greenish colour. When I landed on the opposite shore, I discovered that the natives had been there very lately from the print of their feet in the sand. We continued walking till five in the afternoon, when we saw several smokes along the shore. As we naturally concluded that these were certain indications where we should meet the natives who were the ob-

jects of our search, we quickened our pace; but, in our progress, experienced a very sulphurous smell, and at length discovered that the whole bank was on fire for a very considerable distance. It proved to be a coal mine, to which the fire had communicated from an old Indian encampment. The beach was covered with coals, and the English chief [an Indian with Mackenzie] gathered some of the softest we could find, as a black dye; it being the mineral, as he informed me, with which the natives render their quills black."

Fort Norman has a kingly position, at the confluence of Great Bear River with the Mackenzie. Across the former river from the post is Bear Rock, which rises out of the stream like the Big Rock at Wrigley, to a height about two hundred feet greater—some fourteen hundred feet above the sea, and perhaps twelve hundred feet above the water. It runs back from the stream for more than a mile, like a mesa, and the front is seamed and rugged; as the boat nosed the sand at a woodpile near the foot, it towered above us like a northern Gibraltar. Across the stream, about seventy-five miles away, was the long, snow-crowned range of the Carcajou Mountains, at the end of the chain of the Rockies.

The post itself is on a high embankment, like that at Fort Simpson. There is little in the architecture of the village with its Roman and Anglican missions to detain the visitor, but a great event for our ship's company was a marriage in the church of the latter mission, with the Reverend Franklin Clarke, every inch a man as well as a devoted missionary, officiating. He is a graduate of Trinity College, Toronto; his wife is another of those brave, wholesome, helpful women who are as a fount of piety and charity to "the poor

Bear Rock, Fort Norman

Big Rock, Fort Wrigley

and him that hath no helper." In her own house she has a school of six pupils.

The Indian dogs here were in particularly bad condition. The sergeant of the Mounted Police had sent out the Indian owners of one hundred of the dolorous beasts, with instructions not to return with them to "take treaty" till the dogs were fed. Seven dogs brought aboard as passengers were ravenous. As the poor things clamped their jaws over the least scrap, I thought of the words: "Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." The Mounted Police would justify their existence if they did no more than compel a decent and humane attention to these dogs in summer on the part of the Indians, who now feed their faithful friends and invaluable helpers on little but kicks and curses. The dogs ask nothing better than to keep out of the way of their masters. Where nature supplied a beach with stones, the favorite amusement of the Indian boy is throwing stones at a dog.

Here we met poor McCreery the woodcutter, and heard a tale in sorrowful contrast with the anecdote about the shoes. We learned that in December last, in his lonely outpost on the river where he cut wood, his foot was frozen. He amputated the toes with his jack-knife, and for four months agonized with no visitor to succor him, until April. Then Indians were sent to look for him; content with a superficial search, they returned to report there was no one in the place where they were bidden to look. A sergeant of the Mounted Police, not satisfied with the report, went out to hunt for him, and found him scraping snow from between the logs of his hut, a small bag of flour beside him

for all his sustenance. He was brought in more dead than alive: Dr. Richardson, who attended him, said he was the very picture of a corpse. Presumably the Government through the Mounted Police will pay the surgeon's bill of $600: McCreery had no visible assets.

An interesting visitor was in from Dease River, at the other end of Great Bear Lake—one of the most isolated spots in creation. This was D'Arcey Arden, who guided Inspector La Nauze on the journey to Coronation Gulf to get the Eskimo murderers. Ordinarily, he said, the ice is out of Great Bear Lake from July 25th to August 15th. The reason it took the La Nauze party thirteen days to go upstream ninety miles to the Lake was that they had a scow and a York boat to track. On the present occasion he intended to take his own laden scow back, which would require about ten days. In a canoe he is able to ascend the river in three or four days.

He agrees with Stefansson as to the habitability of the Arctic, but holds that Stefansson is phenomenal in his capacity to wrest a living from the ice. "I can do it myself, after twenty years' experience, but the man who does not know how will perish if he tries it." He pleaded for tolerance in the consideration of the case of the Eskimo murderer of Tree River.

I said, "Do you think this murder was due to mistaken leniency with the Eskimo murderers captured by the La Nauze party?"

"I do not," he answered, earnestly. "The young man who killed Doak and Binder is one of the Coronation Gulf Eskimos with whom I am perfectly familiar. I have but recently returned from that region. I was very fond of Doak, and deplore his death. But affec-

tion for him must not blind one to the facts. We must bear in mind that the Eskimo cannot be expected in a short time to adjust themselves to the white man's justice and the white man's social ethics."

Every other Indian at Fort Norman wore one of the black yachting-caps with a yellow band or cord, which the Indian seems to like so well despite his usual aversion to yellow. The pull of fashion, it would seem, is as strong with the Indian as with his civilized brother. The hat perhaps suggests a uniform: it seems to confer a quasi-official distinction on the wearer. When I first saw so many wearing it, I thought it a badge of fealty to the Hudson's Bay Company, and imagined it had sworn all the able-bodied men into its service as a measure of shrewd commercial strategy to embarrass its competitors.

About a mile down the river was an oil camp (of the Imperial Oil Company) with a derrick. The plant has not been productive. Three men made their appearance, and we put aboard ten tons of freight to be transferred to the so-called "discovery" well about forty-five miles downstream from Fort Norman, where the flurry of 1920 and 1921 took place, and so many claims were staked out. There were no prospectors on our steamer: the rush is over. We were informed, however, that in drillings of the current season, at the "discovery" well site, there had been a small "lucky strike," and we were erroneously told at the Fort Norman post that the gusher produced a hundred barrels of oil in a few minutes.

At the "discovery" well, there have been forty men during the past winter. Three wells were partly sunk, in preparation for deeper-going drilling operations at

the first sign of spring. Claims are now staked for virtually the whole distance from Fort Norman, even including the islands in the river. On the islands, in fact, it is easier to land, and driftwood is readily obtainable for fuel, since big logs float all the way down from the Liard at Fort Simpson.

Early in the fall of 1920 the public learned of the discovery of oil; on September 12th, the president of the Imperial Oil Company made it known at Ottawa that eight barrels a day were coming from a depth of 425 feet. What excitement there was came to a climax in the spring and summer of 1921, but at no time did it materialize in a tidal movement of sufficient dimensions to deserve the name of "boom." As a Mounted Police inspector said, seventy-five men might crowd one of the small river boats, and mean a considerable accession to the population of any river post, but "outside" so small a number would be negligible.

On June 17, 1921, a statement purporting to come from the Standard Oil Company was published in the New York *World*. It was declared that no oil would be moved for ten years. The development, it was said, was not profitable; and a pipe-line to take the oil 1200 miles to the end of steel at Waterways on the Clearwater would cost $40,000,000. Canada cannot afford a Mackenzie River Railway for a long time to come. The river-boats with their shallow draft cannot carry the oil, except as fuel. That is the situation at the time of writing. It would take a sensational find of oil to change it. One dares not aver positively that there will be no such find.

At the oil well, the course of the river is between the Carcajou Mountains, from forty-five to sixty miles

distant in the west, reaching a height of perhaps 3500 feet, and the Discovery Range (so named in 1921) on the east, only a few miles from the river, rising to 2200 feet. These two ranges, bare and brown, with transient snow on them in summer, accompany the river a long way and constitute a scenic feature with few parallels. The region in front of the mountains is exceedingly difficult to traverse, as the willows are so close together that an ax is needed to cleave a way. But from a point behind the first derrick a trail leads to a lake where the Indians fish; it is entirely feasible to walk along the edge of the lake and ascend the highest summit of the Discovery Mountains from the farther shore.

Seven miles above the original "discovery" well is a derrick, and the only horse in the region—a pet like a dog—was grazing along the beach in front of it, as we could see from the steamer. Here is one of three new shafts sunk by the Imperial Oil Company's drills in the spring of 1922. Almost across the river are the "C Camp" and the Bear Island derricks. At the first of the three new wells the drills have gone to 1500 feet and found nothing more than seepage. At the "C Camp" well the formation has reached 1700 feet down, but there is nothing further to report. In the "discovery" well, oil was struck at 750 feet.

We landed at the famous "discovery" well at ten in the evening, and despite the hour the drill was busy and a white plume of steam arose. It was necessary to run out about 300 feet of wire rope to find a secure hold to keep our boat at the beach while the freight was unloaded.

There were two twelve-hour shifts at work—mid-

night to noon, noon to midnight—of three men each, and in all fifteen or sixteen men were on hand, living in a group of log huts, the largest humorously marked "Tegler Building" for the office building in Edmonton. There was a flourishing vegetable garden; men and dogs were jolly, cordial, and well fed.

The latest strike, of which we had heard the report at the Fort Norman post, instead of yielding one hundred barrels in a few minutes produced about five barrels in all. About one hundred and fifty feet had been drilled in the week preceding our visit, almost to the 1000-foot level. Only five feet was drilled in 1921; the rest of the work last season was merely "cleaning out," so that this was virtually the first drilling for two years. The men were to have gone out early in the 1922 season, but the hopeful indication had led to the decision to go deeper.

"If we think it's a job to keep our fires fed with wood," said one of the deck hands as we threshed away from the oil well, "how about the old *Distributor?* She used 250 cords one round trip. She had only eight deck hands. They put on a crew of Indians to help out, and loaded thirteen cords in six hours at one place. They have carried as much as sixty and seventy cords at a time."

Nobody would be better pleased to have oil-burning engines on the Mackenzie than those who must undertake the enormous labor of keeping steam up on the stern-wheel wood-burning steamers.

In a curious passage from Mackenzie's narrative of his voyage, he writes that six days after he had started back he passed a small river where the natives and the Eskimos collected flint. The bank contained "small

The Pioneer Horse, near Fort Norman

Imperial Oil Company Airplane

Discovery Well

stony flakes like slate, but not so hard. Among them are found pieces of Petrolium, which bears a resemblance to yellow wax, but is more friable. The English Chief informed me that rocks of a similar kind are scattered about the country at the back of the Slave Lake, where the Chipewyans collect copper."

A few miles above Fort Good Hope, which is just outside the Arctic Circle, the Ramparts begin. The blackened remains of an ice-jam were piled high on the left bank as we came to them. They are not so high as the Palisades of the Hudson, but they are sheer, and the rock surface is entirely bare. They are as clean-cut as if made with a knife in cheese. The full force of the rapid current—six to eight miles an hour—is imprisoned in a channel hardly more than three hundred yards wide from rock wall to rock wall. The Indian saying is that the river, tired of running along on its stomach so far, turned over on its side. The Ramparts continue for about six miles, and constitute one of the most striking scenic features of the entire journey.

At Fort Good Hope we learned the facts as to the plagiarism of our wood by the crew of the *Distributor*. When Mr. Bassett of the Lamson, Hubbard Company went through last fall, he was a party to a verbal agreement with Mr. Gowen (the Hudson's Bay Company agent at Fort Good Hope) to let the H. B. Company have their wood, as the *Distributor* was not expected in 1922 to go below Norman. There were about one hundred cords. Mr. Gowen, for the H. B. Company, agreed to take the wood, at $5 per cord. He had paid for sixty cords in trade, and had said he would pay for the rest when it was meas-

ured. When the *Distributor* came down this summer, Mr. Gowen, anticipating trouble, interviewed the *Distributor's* transportation manager and Mr. Bassett. The former said the Lamson, Hubbard people had no authority to make the deal: that the wood belonged to the Alberta and Arctic Transportation Company, of which the Lamson, Hubbard Company is a subsidiary. The *Distributor* took the wood. On the up trip, Mr. Gowen made a determined effort to protect the pile, overturning the barrow as fast as it was loaded by the crew of the *Distributor*.

"Get out of the way, young fellow!" shouted the Captain, whose name was Bucie.

The "young fellow" refused to budge.

"Run over him, boys!" the Captain ordered. But the men did not obey. The enraged Captain seized a billet of wood—using the other man's property as a weapon against him—and struck Mr. Gowen on the right shoulder, inflicting a bruise, and on the fingers of the left hand, leaving a scar.

"Next time they come they ought to get a yard of black sateen out o' the store and paint a skull and cross-bones on it," was Mr. Gowen's embellishment as he finished the story. "I'd 'a' went an' got a shotgun, but I didn't want to kill some poor, innocent deckhand that wasn't responsible."

To outsiders the whole affair might seem trivial—of as little moment as a dog-fight; but to the scanty river population the principle is by no means insignificant. Every woodcutter and every one else who has anything to do with navigation is concerned.

At Fort Good Hope, where the bank is very high

and very steep, three flights of steps have been built—a phenomenal solicitude for the pedestrian in this part of the world. As five hundred bags of flour and many boxes were put off, at the bottom of the sharp acclivity, one realized the sagacity of the Company when it printed this proviso in its folders: "Delivery of goods is made at the end of gangplanks on the beach—not on top of river bank—and goods are thereafter at owner's risk."

There was a mass going on very rapidly in the brilliantly garnished little Roman Catholic church, and as I watched the humble, ragged Indian acolyte assisting the priest before four shawled, kneeling Indian hags, I wondered how much of the rapidly mumbled, perfunctory Latin the tiny congregation understood. Yet when the time came for the responses, they were promptly uttered. If the mission were taken away, and the teepees of the Indians waiting for treaty, and the dogs half asleep and wholly starved, not much of a hamlet would remain. Most of what was left would be whitewash, and because of the lavish use of the brush the village, forlorn as it is, makes a braver showing than most of the other river-posts. None will deny that the post has a fortunate site on its high ridge with its far-flung horizon. Between Fort Good Hope and Arctic Red River there is a settlement of two houses called New Chicago. It was put on the map at the time of the Klondike excitement. The steamer does not stop there.

The departure from Fort Good Hope was delayed because a small Indian lad in khaki, with a red-lettered paddle in his hand, felt compelled to shake hands with

nearly everybody on the water-front—especially the boys sprawling on top of the flour-bags—before embarking for Arctic Red River.

If only the Indians, old and young, would bestow more leavings among the dogs, and fewer among themselves!

CHAPTER XII

THE ARCTIC FORESHORE

Arctic Red River, close to the head of the Mackenzie Delta, is another place that bears out Stefansson's notion of "the friendly Arctic" and contradicts the popular concept of a frigid, glaciated, treeless, flowerless Polar foreshore, fit only to be the demesne of the Polar bear, the seal, and the fox. It is approached through miles of "the lower Ramparts," as they have been named—only less spectacular than the upper Ramparts because their slope is more gradual, and to a large extent earth replaces the rock. We swung round a promontory into a harbor formed by the mouth of the Arctic Red River as it enters the Mackenzie. The first boat we saw was an Eskimo "schooner"—which we should call a yawl—from the Delta. Aboard it was the merriest, jolliest Eskimo family of seven, who waved us a greeting and when we landed invited us aboard. They were dressed just as a southerner expects the Eskimo to dress, in their furs—muskrat skins—with hoods. They were perfectly willing to sit for any number of snapshots, and not the least important member of the group was their pet *kimmik* (dog), a chubby, fuzzy black object, obviously pampered, round as a lady's muff, and ready to take alarm on slight provocation. The artless way they included him in the family circle was refreshing

after the habitual unfeeling demeanor of the Indian toward his beasts of burden.

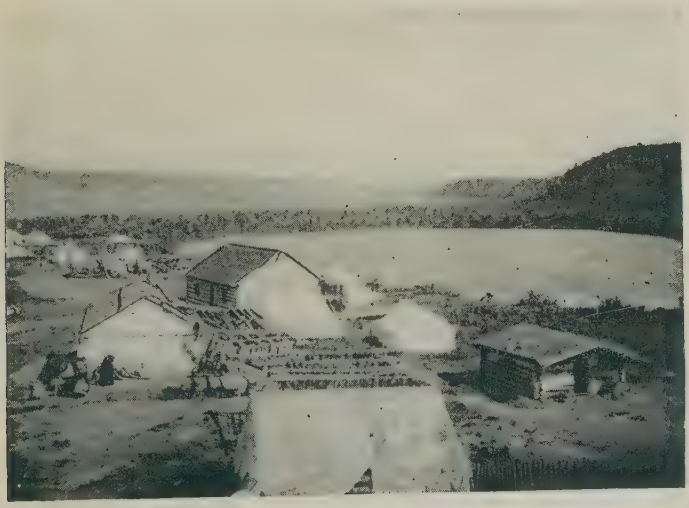
The dogs ashore were in good condition. "Had you come with your garbage pail two weeks ago," said Mr. Allen, the Company's agent, "they would have eaten pail and all. But since then the fish have been biting, and they've had plenty."

In a few minutes the women passengers had their hands full of a brilliant variety of flowers—the purple, fuchsia-like blossoms of the "painter's brush," the gold of yellow daisies and wild mustard, the pinkish purple of the fireweed, the wild rose, the wild carrot or "Queen's necklace," and half-a-dozen more.

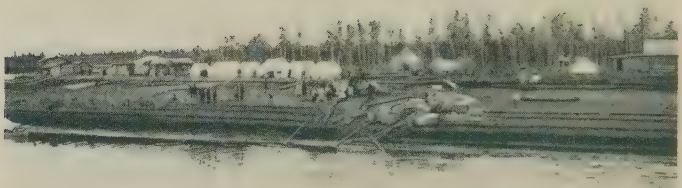
Mr. Clark, of the Northern Trading Company, had further details as to the Tree River murder, that had sifted in from the Delta. The youth who slew Doak afterwards went to sleep with a revolver, loaded and cocked, tied to his waist. The policeman who came after the assassin had the presence of mind to spring on the weapon as it lay on the ground, before the murderer could use it. The revolver was discharged harmlessly into the earth. Doak, when killed, was on his way to capture two other murderers—one in Banks Land and the other at the eastern end of Coronation Gulf. These have now been apprehended, and it was thought that all three murderers, in charge of the Inspector, who went to Aklavik to fetch them, would be waiting for us at McPherson and would be brought to Fort Smith on our steamer.

Mr. Clark expressed his feelings forcibly with regard to the two Eskimos who were turned loose in the north again after La Nauze brought them out in 1917. "It has had a bad effect on the Eskimos," he declared.

Eskimo Lad with His "Kimmik"



Arctic Red River



Aklavik

"The Eskimos who went back have been able to talk about the wonders they saw. They rode in railway trains and saw cities. They were well fed and housed. The other Eskimos would like to have the same kind of good time they had. They have seen the murderers of 1917 rewarded—as it might seem to them—instead of punished. Apparently murder is the way to get all these good things. It is hardly remarkable that these other murders have taken place, under the circumstances. An example should be made of these three men.

"I have no bad debts with the Eskimos. They pay up to the last cent: if they die, their obligation is taken over by the surviving members of the family. Not so with the Indian. When he dies, his debt dies with him. Fortunately this year I have managed to collect. I have to extend 'jawbone' credit, much as I would like to do business on a cash basis. The Indian who goes off into the bush for furs cannot go on nothing. He will not bring in the furs until midwinter. I have to grub-stake him and give him sufficient ammunition; it may cost $300 to $400. It is taking a chance. If he does well, it is paid back. If he fails—how can he pay? There is nothing on which the trader can collect."

Arctic Red River is a great fishing center. The fish are sent from here to Good Hope and to Norman. The inconnus ("connies") are up to seventy-eight pounds in weight; the whitefish go to about half that weight. It is, therefore, a place where the dogs flourish. As the women ply their bright, sharp knives to clean the fish, the dogs are looking and licking at the edges of the boards, and the Indians' dogs rise up in fierce una-

nimity to drive off the traders' dogs, as intruding aristocrats, when they come near. A permanent exhibit of the settlement is the quantity of fish drying on their lofty scaffoldings or with fires in a log hut.

Mr. Clark this year is attempting to create Arctic Red River's first garden. There were in evidence lettuce-plants about two inches high. He brought in potatoes last winter in his parka, and slept with them against his body on the journey, to keep them from being frozen, and even then they were slightly touched with frost. Carrots, beets, and cabbages are possibilities, but a minute black fly is responsible for the death of many a radish and many a cabbage sown in the hope of the taste of something green. There is much consumption here, and fresh vegetables could they be obtained would go far to improve the health of the community.

Under the eaves of Mr. Clark's house the mud-swallows had built half-a-dozen nests, barely farther from the ground than a man's head, and it was a pretty sight to see the birds peeping out or flying to and fro. Mr. Clark has kept an unceasing vigil to prevent the destruction of the nests by mischievous boys.

The veteran trader knew Bishop Bompas well. "It'll be no use for the R. C.'s to start a mission at Aklavik, as they propose," he asserted. "Bishop Bompas got them all. He was in every way a man of the North. He went into the Eskimo igloos and took pot-luck with them and in all respects adapted himself to their mode of living."

A passenger coming in from the Delta said: "I was with the Mounted Policeman when he brought in the Eskimo murderer. He's just a young fellow. First

he was taken to Aklavik, and then he was brought to Macpherson, where you will find him. No, I do not think the leniency shown to the murderers of the priests in 1917 led to this latest tragedy. The shootings of last summer took place among the Eskimos themselves. Sometimes there are jealous quarrels over women."

We piled up a young mountain of canoes, boxes, crates, and bags on the beach, while the Indians in their yellow-banded yachting caps squatted and smoked and chatted on the bank. It seemed a lot for such a little ship to carry—but it was not a lot when one reflects that in 1250 miles we met but two small boats that had carried supplies to the mouth of the river. What is freight to us is the bread of life to the few souls who call the Arctic foreshore "home."

One of the pleasant memories is of Mr. Clark's two dogs, Jack and Oogluk—which is, being interpreted, "Whale Blubber." Jack was supposed to be very shy.

"I've been driving him for three years," said Mr. Clark, "and in all that time I don't suppose I've laid hands on him twice."

But by making a sufficient fuss over Oogluk, Jack through a twinge of jealousy was induced to draw near, and finally to nuzzle one's hand.

"That's a wonder," said Mr. Clark. "I've never seen him do that before."

Oogluk licked one's hands or face if he could, put out a fawning paw, and closed his eyes in bliss when stroked under the throat or scratched behind the ears. He was so well fed, without being overfed, that it was a real satisfaction to contemplate him. Two other fine dogs were chained in a big, roomy kennel. They could not be trusted to run at large, for they had

developed the reprehensible habit of killing puppies and bringing them to Mr. Clark's door and laying them there as trophies of the chase. They were amiable cannibals, though they made their domicile resound with their howls of protest at being tethered.

Another dog who speedily ingratiated himself ran into the water and fetched an empty butter-tin, bringing it out by the lid. It was half filled with water. I took it from him and poured out the water. He perfectly understood that I was trying to help him get the butter that still adhered to the inside of the can. He did the best he could with his tongue, but when I got the stick and scraped out the can he waited patiently and licked the butter from the stick. After I had done all I could with the stick, he went to work with his long pink tongue again, and polished the entire inner surface of the can till it glittered like a heliograph. He knew he had a capital prize in that butter-tin. The dogs distinguish readily among such cans. I am informed on good authority that they know the difference between tomato-cans and beef-cans, and when they have broken into stores they have disregarded the first in favor of the second.

Mr. Clark has no love of "the busy haunts of men." He says of himself:

"I went out to Vancouver three years ago. I couldn't stand it—the mass of people shoving to and fro. I used to stand so long at the corners waiting to cross, they'd say, 'O come on, you can't wait here all day!' I got so I'd use side-streets or take a taxi. I counted the days till it was time to go. I'd get on steamers and travel around and up and down and when they asked me where I'd been I had nothing to say.

"Locking your door every night got on my nerves. Why, we never do that here. Here, if you were to go on the Porcupine, you might find $2000 lying among the dirty dishes in a man's house, and nobody would touch it. Why, we've had $5000 in a tree in a gunny sack, and it was perfectly safe. In a man's cabin when he's gone you may come in and find instructions as to where he's left everything—and you're perfectly welcome to use it if you need if. You'd do the same for him. He may say in a notice he has left: 'You'll find flour in the barrel by the sink. There are sugar and tea on the lower shelf of the cupboard. For goodness' sake leave some shavings after you've made your fire.' Snowshoes on end or in a tree-trunk are not to be taken. On the snow, anybody is welcome to them.

"I carry the mail between Good Hope and Macpherson. If I didn't spend the night in the nearest house, they'd think there was something the matter—they'd believe I had a grudge against them. No, sir, you couldn't take a coffee-pot off your sledge or you'd insult them. They long to be hospitable, and to give you the best they've got."

Peter Norberg, taking a holiday from his duties as Hudson's Bay agent on Kent Peninsula, at the eastern end of Coronation Gulf, feels much the same way about the doubtful blessing of being where "news" is made and heard. He is a man of action, who hates to write letters or to keep accounts. He boarded our steamer at Arctic Red River, and came with us to Fort McPherson and thence up the river to Fort Smith.

"No, sir, I told the Company I'd run the boats or build new posts—I'd go anywhere, I'd do anything—

but if they wanted somebody for accounts they'd have to get along without me. For ten years I didn't even write to my own brother in Sweden.

"Fond of adventure? I should say so. I always want to be on the go. I'm too busy to be lonely. There's something to do with the boats or the buildings all the time.

"At Kent Peninsula coal till recently cost $300 a ton. Four and a half tons in 1920 cost $1300. Now it's down to $200, because freight-rates have been reduced. You see there has to be so much rehandling from the larger ships to the smaller ones.

"If gold were struck on this river, you'd have as many people here as there are on the Yukon. Oil needs to have a company back of it, to put up a derrick and install machinery and drills. If it's placer mining on a small scale, a man can stake out his claim and go it alone."

As we came into the Delta, toward the midnight sun, the chain of the Richardson Mountains was outspread before us. Peter Norberg stood in the prow, inhaling the view and exhaling fact and opinion.

"I don't know why that young Eskimo killed Doak," he said. "We talked with him about it, and he said, 'All that morning I was trying to persuade myself not to do it. But my mind told me to do it, and I had to.' Doak had a forceful, outspoken way of talking, and the Eskimo may have misunderstood it. Everybody liked Doak. I think the Eskimo may have been weak-minded. A man told him he ought to kill his uncle, and he did. After he had killed Doak, he probably killed the Hudson's Bay man because he didn't want him to tell what he knew about it. I don't think letting the

Eskimo murderers go in 1917 had anything to do with it. This is the first murder of a white man since then."

The Peel River is the thoroughfare across the head of the Mackenzie Delta from the main stream to Fort McPherson, the last stopping-place of the Hudson's Bay steamer. We slid along the iridescent narrow channel of many serpentine windings, in the coolness and peace of the Arctic twilight, and it was hard to believe that the crowding verdure was ever frost-nipped or snow-bound. But on a sandbar, as at the mouth of Arctic Red River, was the blackened débris of the ice, which at the latter place went out June 2d. The air was honey-sweet with evergreen. Little, lost brooks came in glinting under the midnight sun, through dense copses of willow. All along the watercourse the banks, sharp-hewn, stood up black and overhanging, where the ice had rammed and undermined them, with the spruces aslant and askew at the brink, or dead and gray as ashes in the water, amid the darkling shadows where the dying fires of a sundown that was one with the sunrise were reflected. In some places the fringe of turf and the underlying strata had collapsed entirely into the cavern beneath; at other points stone and earth splashed into the water and it was as if great fish were jumping there.

It was an extraordinary feat of gymnastics to get at the woodpile this time. The bank was almost vertical, and nearly fifty feet high. An active lad named Miller leapt at it from the end of the gangplank and swarmed at it like a monkey, trailing the wire rope with him. He hooked it round a stump, but the current had carried the boat too far, and he had to try

again and run it farther forward. Meanwhile the mosquitoes swarmed wherever a face or bare hands appeared, afloat or ashore. The other boys made a scrambling landing, adjusted their head nets, and put the chute up the bank almost at the perpendicular. They must have had viscous feet. Why they did not drop into the stream, with the pebbles and chunks of mud about them, remains a mystery.

They reverse night and day at Fort McPherson—especially when the boats of the three companies pay their sole annual visit. They work at night when it is cool and sleep by day, but the outsider cannot see much difference, except in the sun's position.

At 4 A. M. virtually the whole population was on the beach to greet us, amid shouts and laughter and gleeful recognition of acquaintances. There was a waving of branches like Palm Sunday in Jerusalem, but the gesture was not part of the popular acclaim—it was to repel the insatiable mosquito. Bishop Lucas's deep voice emerged from behind a white veil. There was an Eskimo baby in full uniform of muskrat in the front row. The school children returning from Hay River had to run the gantlet of much embracing and handshaking. The contrast between them, neatly clad and brushed and groomed, and the children who had had no such training was striking. The tents of the Indian village, where the dogs were staked in the dust, absorbed them, and the struggle is on again between the environment and the individual. Will these boys and girls who have learned better lift up, or will the environment and their heredity drag them down? Their parents evidently were proud of them, and glad to have them back. The dogs kept up a chorus of

At Fort McPherson

The Ramparts

howls and—since few are of the tribe of the pure "huskies"—they barked heartily.

The morning was still young when "there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee." The little Anglican church was crowded—the Indian families left only their dogs behind. Miss Ethel Terry, from our ship, was married to Mr. Mordaunt Crisall, the popular young clergyman, Bishop Lucas performing the ceremony. Afterwards, an Indian rang the church bell like mad, wild cheering rent the welkin, a firing-squad made the echoes ring from over the river where the snow-clad Rockies beckoned toward Alaska, and the white people prodigally threw at least a pound of rice away as the bride in white raiment emerged from the church door and bowed her head to the cereal shower.

I dropped in at a pioneer's house for a chat with the apostolic veteran, John Firth. He told me that in the old days the Eskimo encampments were along the beach for a mile in the summer season. Now they have their own nearer posts, in the Delta and on Coronation Gulf. The fur business flourished last winter—rats (i.e., muskrats) in particular. There are few silver foxes here, not more than three or four in a winter. There are a few caribou and moose. One trapper last winter, two hundred miles east of Herschel Island, caught 206 white foxes and made a net profit of $7000. But an old man over eighty who trades at Cape Parry did still better. On Bailey Island he trapped 500 white foxes, worth $30 apiece—$15,000 for his season's work.

John Firth has crossed the ranges between the Peel and Yukon Territory a hundred times. There is an overland portage which leads to the abandoned

"Pierre's House" in four days. The water route is down the Peel eleven miles to the Husky River, then along the Husky thirteen miles to the Rat, and thence over the tundra to the Porcupine. If you go overland you must take canvas with you and make a canoe, a two days' task, at Pierre's.

He let me see a ballad that a poet laureate of the Mackenzie, Joe Hodgson already quoted, wrote about him. Here is a sample:

"These weaklings now who ape our places
Hard would be put to save their faces;
Not one of them could eat dog traces,
Or fill his guts on snowshoe laces.
It stirs one's spleen to hear them talk
And strut around: I can't say walk
In well-brushed suit and standing collar
Though in their pockets not a dollar.
When traveling round no snowshoe blisters
The toes of these perfumed misters.
But each warm clothed, well fed, doth loll
Most dignified in cariole;
A man ahead before his dogs;
And then, to carry all his togs,
And grub and razors, portmanteau,
And extra bedding not a few,
A second sled brings up the rear,
That he from want may well be clear.
To tell of all the various food
I will not try: 'twould do no good.
A few I'll mention: fruits and jams,
Much potted meat and potted hams,
Currant cakes, and even custard,
And sandwiches, done up with mustard.
In your day, John, a slab of meat
Was about all one got to eat,
And sometime when the food ran short,
And men with packet left the fort,

To make grub run, they got a gun:
But to such men 'twas only fun:
These pigmies now would wear no smiles,
If marching thus three hundred miles."

Sergeant Johnson, of the Mounted Police, a dashing and decorative figure at the wedding, said that the Eskimo murderer would be taken to Herschel Island for his trial. A commissioner is expected to come in from the south. Several other cases await his attention. The murderer expects to be hanged, and the prospect does not seem to perturb him. "Death means little to the Eskimos. They are ordinarily a good-humored, inoffensive, peaceable lot. But if one or two men go among a crowd of a couple of hundred armed Eskimos to get a man, you can see that they stand a poor chance of getting him unless the Eskimos want to give him up."

I saw the murderer. I did not talk with him, for he would have thought me an official inquisitor, and I had no wish to add to the burden of whatever cross he carries to the foot of the gallows to which he must go.

He was working outside the hut where they kept him at night. He was loading and wheeling a barrow, and there was no check on his movements. But if he started to run—there was no place for him to run to. He could not go into the wilderness without equipment. On the foot of the bed in the Sergeant's tent were the steel manacles he wore by night. All the murder that was in him to do has been done. The fire is gone. He must die. He alone knows how much or how little he cares to live. The leader in the murder of the priests at Coronation Gulf in 1913 might have

been drawn into a murderous affray in 1921. Mindful of his narrow escape, he refused. He let it be known that he has done all the killing he intends to do. That is undoubtedly the mental attitude of Aleck Omiak today. He is through. His life is also through. He is merely surviving himself till the legal penalty is paid.

His age is variously given at seventeen to twenty—I should say the latter would be close to the right figure. He is undersized, and physically insignificant. His long, straight black hair hangs down to his shoulders under his yachting cap, ordinarily the sign of a man's ambition to be a pilot. But this face is ambitionless, stupid, vacuous, silly—as meaningless as the deed for which his life must pay. The hair hangs down as in a Holbein portrait—but the head is brainless as the face is hairless. The impression is one that it were better to erase from the tablets of memory.

At Fort Macpherson I was in the way of hearing much about the medicine-men, whose authority has not yet succumbed to the prophylaxis of the Christian religion. Superstition is in the warp and woof of the Indian nature. The last thing an Indian will mention to a stranger is his belief in the cabalistic practices of the medicine man. But repeated exposure and failure have not put the impostor entirely out of business. For the Indian's path in every waking hour is crossed by influences malign or benign—there is always a genie to be appeased, placated, propitiated. An Indian sat with his footgear carelessly laced, bewailing his luck with moose. A woman said: "You will kill no moose if you lace your shoes that way." That night she relaced them. The next day he killed two moose. That

proves triumphantly, to the Indian mind, that there was a jinx, a hoodoo to be put out of business ere the hunter could hope for success.

The medicine man's stock in trade is a formula or a symbol. A knot tied in a handkerchief, a bunch of grass, a handful of tea leaves or moss—these, made efficacious by the formula of the medicine man, have a magic potency. The system is precisely adapted to the Indian's outlook on the Indian's world. The brains of a moose are taken out and hung in a tree. Why? So that these brains in the head of the animal cannot inform other moose that the hunter is on the trail. You must not feed a woman moose-tongue. Why? Because her tongue will then let the moose know that the hunter is after them.

The medicine man makes medicines (i.e., symbols, or inimical thoughts) against a man, and promptly that unlucky individual falls ill. "They can lie down and die when they want to," said one who was steeped in the almost limitless lore of the complicated subject. An Indian at Chipewyan—such is the hold of the imagination on a member of the race—was told that the "pop" and cold tea he was drinking were whisky, and he became intoxicated. A man was told he looked ill, and he became ill.

An Eskimo makes a collar of deerskin for his dog and thus transfers his own ailment to his animal. As the Indian has his medicine man, the Eskimo has his shaman, to be his intermediary with the spirit world, and the Eskimo, who believes that in dreams the eyes go traveling, has a full and elaborate outfit of superstitions which all who deal with him must recognize and realize. Here one can do no more than advert

to this extended realm of investigation: but the reader may easily possess himself of an exhaustive and sympathetic discussion of the subject in D. Jenness's work, "The Home of the Copper Eskimo," which was published in 1922 at Ottawa as the twelfth volume of the Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913–1918.

Are these native superstitions any more foolish than the mummeries of the "pow-wow doctors" of eastern Pennsylvania, who make passes and mutter gibberish over a sick cow, or place an ax under an infant's crib to help it through the ordeal of teething? In settled parts of staid and orthodox England one will find many a blind belief not a whit less fantastic.

At midnight on the day of the marriage there was a dance to which the whole village, if not bedridden with the palsy, came. It was late for a white stranger, but it was a seasonable hour for the Indian, who goes by Pacific time, two hours earlier than watches and clocks unchanged since Edmonton. Anyway, the brief sojourn of the steamers comes but once a year, and the people make merry while the sun shines all or nearly all night. There were loads of children who did not "have to go to bed by day." There was no need of a lamp. The place was a small log warehouse of the Hudson's Bay Company. Caribou skins dangled below the dog-sleds in the rafters, almost tickling the noses of the dancers.

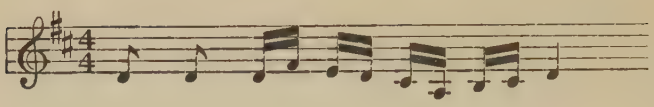
The wailing of the babies was like part of the music. The mothers sat on the floor, smoking like teepee-fires, their children strapped over their backs or clambering across their knees. The men stood against the log walls. In the middle of one side of the room was

the Eskimo murderer—my second view of him—and in the middle of the end of the room was the Mounted Policeman charged with the care of him. The murderer's wan and inane face, like yellow parchment, occasionally brightened a little with something like a smile. He spoke to nobody; nobody spoke to him. His presence was taken for granted: there was nothing to distinguish him from those about him—except that he had committed a murder.

At the opposite end of the room from the Mounted Policeman sat the two fiddlers, wearing those everlasting, universal yachting caps with the red Hudson's Bay insignia, which—as Miss Traynor the stewardess said—make a crowd of Indians look like a convention of harbor-masters or an army of cinema attendants.

The leading fiddler held his instrument in the crook of his arm and sawed the dance-tunes into lengths with more heed to the rhythm than to the tune. He had tuned the fiddle apparently with an interval of only a fourth between what should have been the D and the A strings, which gave a pleasing Oriental dissonance and an effect of minor melancholy. The other fiddler laid his fiddle horizontally on his knees and unmercifully beat a rataplan upon it with small sticks. At the Hudson's Bay house at Fort Simpson a board is worn clear through in the corner where the fiddler sits tapping on the floor. At Fort Norman a fiddler in a single season wore out four pairs of moccasins and charged them in the bill. The artist cannot perform without the footwork.

In the "Red River Jig," a prime favorite, this figure was repeated over and over:



with a variation a ninth higher. It was danced by couples, one couple at a time, the man doing a clog-dance, the woman shuffling crab-wise in moccasins. Substitutes, first for the man, then for the woman, cut in and out *ad libitum,* when there was any sign of weakening.

Fat women bounced and rolled like churns through the Reel of Eight. Some of them should have waited for the wind to die down before trying to navigate across the dancing-floor—they seemed to find it heavy going in a beam sea. In this maneuver the woman waggles sideways, while the gentleman kicks out almost as though going through the old-time goose-step of the Prussian soldier. One beldame who must have been seventy complained that her shoes were too stiff for the Red River Jig; so she toddled off home and returned with her feet encased in a pair of the more flexible moccasins in which she put many of the younger set to shame.

The Indians laughed and applauded; the babies cooed and squealed and gurgled; the women grunted; the dogs outside howled in their loneliest rising and falling cadences; and pandemonium reigned. The room became so hotly crowded, as newcomers encroached on the small space for the dancers, that one began to believe the dance might have to come down to a *pas seul.* There were the Reel of Four and the Duck Dance, the Rabbit Dance and the Handkerchief

Dance, the Kissing Dance and the Drops of Brandy, but the favorite was the simple, old-time Square Dance, an adaptation of reels and the lancers, during which the gentleman swung his partner so energetically and continuously that her feet hardly ever touched the boards. But there was no doubt as to his own resounding klop-klop. One was ready to believe the statement that the Hudson's Bay factors used to teach the Indians to dance in order to harden their feet for travel through the snow with the dogs.

One of our deck hands, named Miller, had the very important post of master of ceremonies. As he called the figures he whirled through them himself with all the gusto that he gave to passing wood or rustling freight on the river-bank. At the top of his lungs he would yell:

"Lady round the lady and the gent goes so;
And the lady round the gent and the gent don't go."

Then there would be the din and the dust of a wild mêlée; and out of the fracas the commanding voice would pipe again cheerily:

"Promenade around in a single file
And the lady in the lead in the Siwash style."

Commend me to that infectious deck hand, if I ever give a barn-dance and want it to be a go.

"Ladies bow low and the gents bow under;
Couple up tight and swing like thunder."

Then they swung like thunder, and like lightning, too, and the fiddler was almost disjointed in his effort

to keep pace with them. Your effete southern violinist may need resin, but your northern fiddler depends on elbow-grease alone.

"Now swing the one with those big feet,
Now swing the one that looks so sweet;
Now swing the one that gnawed the bone,
Now swing the one you call your own."

The pale-faces now and then stopped to breathe and mop their brows, but the fast footwork of the redskins went on without cessation.

"Leave that lady and home you go,
Opposite gent with the do—see—do."

If you didn't know a syllable of any tongue but Loucheux, you could understand when you saw the action suited to the word as the floor-boards shook and the caribou-skins fluttered like banners overhead.

"Birdie fly out and hawkie fly in,
The hawkie fly out and give birdie a swing."

Hawkie, the man, did as he was told, and Birdie fluttered as airily as her avoirdupois and her four-ply clothing would permit.

"Jump straight up and never come down,
An' swing that calico roun' and roun'."

An Indian dancing might die, but he never surrenders. His fortitude in pleasure equals his fortitude in pain. You wondered what would end the party. Still the deck hand leader shouted:

"You know where and I don't care:
Place that baby in a high arm-chair."

But no bright-eyed Indian infant heeded, and no dusky mother obeyed.

At last, after I left for a wink of sleep, the little minister, Mr. Crisall, handed round three boxes of cigars, and the Indian chief in response made a ten-minute speech. He crammed into as many words as possible the announcement that later in the day—for it was then five in the morning—there would be a feast and a tea-dance in honor of the wedding. The Mackenzie River tea-dance is not one of your penurious, parsimonious affairs at which wafers are brought in on a tray and the tipple is served by the thimbleful. You bring your own mug (meaning the china one), as big as you like, and dip it into a scalding vat, and then the lids of the kettles are used to hand about the pilot-crackers—which, if your teeth are worn down to the gums—you may soak in the tea-vat if you wish. The large, liberal, wholesale way in all things is Mackenzie fashion. Several hours later, the minister came seedily aboard and our touring dentist, Dr. Miller, pulled three of his teeth in preparation for the party. But unhappily we had to wrench our boat's nose out of the mud before the party came off—much to the sorrow of the very sleepy deck hand who was the energetic "barker" of the night before.

Travelers have had many unflattering things to say about the Indian; and the Indian way of accepting the white man's bounty without even a grunt of acknowledgment has made a bad impression on many who have come among them exuding good will and compassion.

But there are odds among Indians as there are said to be among deacons. The Slavey often seems an ingrate; the Loucheux of the Arctic foreshore is prompt if not profuse in the expression of his gratitude. All the Indian parents of Fort Macpherson whose children came home from the Hay River School in 1922 called on Bishop Lucas during his sojourn at the mission house to tell him of their thankfulness for what the school had done for their boys and girls. Moreover, when the Bishop appealed for starving Russian children, the Loucheux did not make answer: "We have poverty of our own. We are often pinched with famine. The fish sometimes fail us, and the traders ask too much for the flour and pay too little for our furs." On the contrary, though they had little or no notion of where Russia was or who the Russians were, they first made their regular church offering and then put $125 in the plates as a supplementary contribution for the Russians. In the preceding year, three hundred of them—men, women, and children—had given $1000 to carry on the mission work. They were much pleased when Bishop Lucas gave to the church—their church—a brass altar-book-rest from Westminster Abbey. He had obtained it when he went to London for the Lambeth Conference. Many had applied to the authorities of the Abbey when it was learned that a new book-rest would replace the old; but they could not resist Bishop Lucas's plea, when he told them what a stimulus this object would prove to Indian loyalty on the Arctic foreshore. (The communion vessels still in use at Fort Macpherson were given sixty years ago by Charlotte Elliott, who wrote the hymn endeared to so many thousands, "Just as I am Without One Plea.")

Some of the Loucheux Indians found by Archdeacon Stuck beyond the Alaska boundary in the Yukon Valley (while Fort Yukon was still in British territory) were continuing to pray for Queen Victoria two years after the death of that estimable ruler. Archdeacon MacDonald, who lived among them forty-two years and translated the Scriptures into their tongue, had taught them to pray for her, and they proposed to continue the practice no matter what outsiders told them about a change in the sovereignty. It required considerable urging on Archdeacon Stuck's part to get them to amend their prayer in order to make it contemporaneous.

The Indians beyond the Arctic Circle would have no use for such a seditionist as Gandhi with his non-co-operation movement, or Eamonn de Valera and his irreconcilables and incendiaries. They would run him out of town. They have a short way with dissenters—and with others. So loyal have they been at Fort Macpherson to the teachings of the late Bishop Bompas that when a Roman Catholic priest came and began to collect their books and burn them as full of error, they drove the priest away; had he remained after that forceful warning they would assuredly have done him violence. The Eskimos of the Delta and of Coronation Gulf said they wished no father in God who walked about among them attired in woman's garb. They draw a line between the costume of sacerdotal use at the altar and that of every day: they approve the cassock in church, but not in the canoe or on the trail.

Inspector Wood of the Mounted Police of this Arctic district told Bishop Lucas that he was glad the Bishop made Billy Thrasher the Eskimo, of Kittigag-

juit, a teacher. "Billy says grace and offers prayers for sixty or seventy Eskimos," said the Inspector. At Fort McPherson is the ordained deacon Edward Sittichinli, who has officiated at marriages of whites to whites as well as at marriages of white men to Indian women. Indian men and white women do not marry.

The Eskimos at Aklavik, without notice, contributed $100 for the Russian children in answer to the Bishop's plea. One man got up in the church before the remarks were concluded, brandishing a roll of $1 bills. These he gave out to those members of the congregation, sitting on the floor, who were not prepared to contribute. An Eskimo woman came next day with her two-year-old baby on her back: and the infant handed over an ermine skin. A father brought a rat-skin (i.e., musk-rat, valued at $1.25) for each of his children.

There came on the boat at Arctic Red River an attractive group of twelve children for the Hay River school. Two of them belonged to the Eskimo family of seven we had seen on the beach.

The Eskimos of the Mackenzie Delta is nothing if not up to date. The mother of this family proudly brandished a thermos bottle, and another Eskimo at Fort McPherson asked me in faultless English for a Number 3 roll of Kodak films. Still another is an expert in taking photographs, and he does his own developing.

The father and mother had been so impressed by what they had seen of the children returning to their homes that they wanted the same good influences for their little ones. Eight children at McPherson had been refused, because there was no room for them, but

the Eskimo appeal seemed irresistible. They and their dog had come so far in the boat—and the mother and father wanted it so much! The little boy and the little girl took a good deal of persuasion. More than a thousand miles of distance, and five years of time would separate those who had never been divided.

Outsiders do not appreciate the immensities of distance here. Learning that Mrs. Lucas's sister was coming to a Mackenzie River post, a friend wrote Mrs. Lucas: "It will be so nice for you to have your sister with you." She did not realize that the two points which looked fairly close on a small-scale map were over 900 miles apart. The sisters saw each other once in five years, when the sister farthest downstream went home to England on furlough.

It was not the miles and it was not the years that distressed the young Eskimo—it was the fact of leaving mother and father, brother and sister, the baby and the dog. But the elders stood firm for the discernible benefit. Father fetched the feather bed, the rabbit-skin quilt, the mosquito-bar, and spread them out beyond the woodpile and beside the precious fur-bales on the lower deck, in the warm lee of the boiler. The transaction took place between 2.45 and 4.45 in the morning. The other children, in their adjoining nooks, sat up to see, and to extend a jabbering, gesticulatory welcome. There was little sleep on our cardboard ship, whose walls had ears.

The Eskimos kissed their children good-by. So did the Indian mothers. As they stood in a row atop of the bank, with the dogs squatting in the mud below watching the door where the cook threw scraps, the faces were not those of the depraved sensualists some

travelers have portrayed. There was much of a quiet and even noble matronly dignity. One woman in particular tried hard to let none see how much she cared that her child was going out by the Big River a thousand miles to a learning and a mode of life that never were her own.

Her black shawl was drawn across her mouth like the *yashmak* a Turkish lady wears—and she drew it closer still, with a suggestion of fierce defiance, a pride superior to grief. She would not let the other women see her cry. But the tears would come, and the back of a brown hand was dashed across her eyes to brush away something more than a mosquito. How foolish it is to suppose that aboriginal flesh and blood are adamant!

Is the native child spoiled by a mission education? Only those who have their own reasons for saying so—or the cynics—or the scoffers—declare it. Those who have their arms shoulder-deep in the work know better—because they have the evidence, the multiplied testimonials, the visible and audible proof day by day that their work was not in vain. The baptisms of the Church of England are more than "a lick and a promise." There have been 3023 baptisms at Peel River (Fort McPherson) in sixty-one years. It cannot be assumed that the majority of those professing a change of heart and a serious Christian purpose were, like "rice-Christians" of the East, going through the motions for what they might gain thereby in the way of purely material benefits.

The children kept house on shipboard as if they were at home. Till a late hour of the night they were singing "Let a Little Sunshine In" and other songs

they had learned—though Margaret Macdonald was the only one who knew what the words meant. A granddaughter of John Firth, she was the leading spirit among the little ones. She was almost white: her grandmother was a half-breed. With her blue, dancing eyes, her wild mop of black hair, her kittenish playfulness and tireless interest in everything, she was a general favorite. She was not sure if she was six or seven years old. The Indian children looked at her round-eyed in admiration and followed where she led. She acted as translator and without hesitation made clear to them what anybody said as if she were somehow responsible for their safe conduct, though they were larger and older than she.

It was pleasant to see how kind the crew and all the passengers were to the little girls. The cook and the engineer, remembering their own children at home, vied with each other to keep them contented, and the deck hands rarely passed without a joke or a romp. There was hardly room in their wee bodies for nostalgia and all the good things to eat at the same time; and from being a woebegone lot with the salt tears of separation trickling down their cheeks they came to regard every day as a new chapter in a great adventure of almost unbounded gladness.

The children had their pallets spread and their mosquito-bars stretched in a gypsy-like encampment like Asia Minor refugees among the fur-bales. It was hard to tell where clothes left off and bedding began. From their trunks no bigger than those of dolls they produced shears almost as long as their arms, thread, needles, and snippets of blue and red cloth and went to work on silk uppers for moccasins and dolls' dresses

with all the industry of a sewing-circle. They were diverted by little things; they were ever so much pleased if anybody paid the slightest heed to them, or played a game or drew a picture or gave them an empty box, or bottle or bit of string or paper. The rubbish that a sophisticated American child would scorn was put by as a treasure—a rubber band, a safety-pin, a nail. Their little lives had taught them the value of everything in a land where, when you have come to the end of what you have, there is likely to be no more for a year, till the ice goes out. When a halt was called at a woodpile, the children gladly swarmed ashore and up the bank in quest of wild flowers, and sometimes the wind almost blew their hair away.

The Eskimo children at first were sad and mute. The break with the past was absolute for them. In their fur-trimmed *artikis* they were out of the picture of the gay little Indian girls in their print dresses.

The children followed the adults in the quaint way of saying "no" as if it were "nu," with the vowel sound clipped short. It had been especially noticeable with Joe Illasiak, the Eskimo boy, and Margaret's blithe, birdlike use of the word reminded one of him.

The father of two of the Indian children was a passenger, and he helped with all of them. He got a basin of water and a cake of soap and washed the faces of his own offspring; he carefully brushed and braided their black hair, and when it was hanging down about their faces while he was combing and pruning, the little bright eyes peeped out through the tangle like some shy, small forest creature peering from the willows or the aspens alongshore. The maternal solicitude of the pelican or of the "husky" dog could not surpass the

tenderness with which he chewed gum and then—surreptitiously—passed it from his cheeks to his children's perfect teeth when it was well started. When the boat stopped at Fort Good Hope he hustled up the steep bank and came back with more needles, and green thread, and purple ribbons, which they ran half the length of the lower deck, from the cook to the woodpile, to show me.

A mischievous return the children made to him for all his solicitude. Weary of well-doing, he lay back on a bale of marten skins and easily fell asleep. Then the little aboriginal pixies came whispering and on tiptoe, like Titania and her fays. Their fairy queen on this occasion was the little Margaret.

Margaret and her retinue at the last woodpile had gone ashore and picked flowers. They trooped aboard at the toot of the whistle with their hands full of the soft, silky plumes of the fox-grass, the blue of the flax, the white of a sort of meadow-sweet, the purple of the vetch and the fireweed, the pink of the "Indian's paint-brush." Round the sleeping Indian father they hovered like the Lilliputs with Gulliver. First they decked out their victim with the flowers. The band of his hat was aflame with the fireweed, his dingy coat was pranked and pied with imperial purple sprouting from every pocket. No doughty chieftain of his ancestry, arrayed for a tribal council, was ever half so gorgeous as Pierre Ratfat innocently looked when the children were through with his amazing efflorescence.

But that was not all. Though they never read a word of Gulliver, they took the very thread that Pierre had bought them, and wound it over him like the spider's shining gossamer. As long as he snored

evenly, like the boat's own black throat coughing the golden rain of sparks upon the river, the small miscreants were safe. But he stirred uneasily, and they fled in a spasm of simulated terror to a dark angle behind the woodpile, and there, with their palms over their mouths, they giggled and smothered in Loucheux till they were sure he was safely back in Dreamland and they might venture abroad again. After the threads, the rogues found bits of string, and begged fishlines from the crew, and ran them from Pierre's buttons to the handle of his trunk, the way the Eskimo boy had tied the net that he was making, a little while before.

When Pierre Ratfat woke, the Freshman Class were piously and quietly sewing away on moccasins for their dolls' feet, having finished with the dresses. There was a snapping as of twigs in the bushes when Pierre reared his mighty bulk, limb by limb, like a bear awaking; and as he pulled the fireweed from his deerskin suspenders and found his pet briarwood pipe upside down among them, against a singed spot on his shirt, he looked over at the shaking shoulders of the Freshman Class and his smile was like the first rays of the sunlight on the Carcajou after the ice goes out between the mountains to the sea in June.

Of late it has been said that the Eskimos are dying out because of the frequency of infanticide. The change seems to apply especially to the Coppermine Eskimos, on Coronation Gulf—the so-called "blond Eskimos" whose discovery was announced by Stefansson. The Eskimos as a whole are not responsible for the faults of a pagan wing of their people. The pagans have been in the habit of killing superfluous babies,

and decrepit old people. Of six Eskimo murderers now at Herschel Island awaiting trial, one is accused of strangling a little girl after the death of her father and mother. Three are implicated in the strangling of husbands with tourniquets of *babiche* (deerskin). These are cases of plural marriage in which the wife has married several husbands (polyandry) and there has been strife in consequence. Another awaiting trial is the boy murderer to whose case reference has been made. "He has a hot temper," said some one who met him at the dance. "But he has a nice smile. When the minister brought out the three boxes of cigars he didn't take one till somebody offered it to him, and gave him a light."

An extended monograph could be written on some of the personal names one encounters every day. Elsie Drymeat, Maria Never-Cries, Lucy Rat, or Peter Snowshoe may sound funny to us, but they are not ridiculous to the Indian. There is an old lady Rat at Fort Fitzgerald. Johnny Thirty Thirty was originally Johnny Kikuvitshik, but his fondness for his Marlin rifle led to the cognomen. "Crowfoot" is a familiar last name. A first name is often bestowed from the first object the mother sees after the child's birth. "Leaf" is one such name. "Rabbit's Lung" is another. "Beautiful" is the translation of a musical Indian original, "Atonda." Chief Sunrise, of the Slavey Indians at Hay River, is a gentleman of the old school. Paul Bonnet-Plume is another worthy. Mary Goose is the name of one of the little girls on board. The Eskimo boy is named Dora—he received the name because the Reverend Mr. Hester got mixed up as to the genders at the font.

A caribou-eater Indian named Manstooth was among those reporting to Inspector Fletcher at Fitzgerald. Pierre Ratfat and Mrs. Lameduck are likewise enrolled upon the roster of the "treaty" Indians. Perhaps the Blackfeet of Alberta incline more to the poetic and the picturesque in nomenclature, with their Running Water and Running Wolf, their High Eagle, Ermine Skin, and Big Stone. A family of Bear's Paws was among the Stoneys—all good Methodists, thanks to the long sojourn of the virtuous Dr. John McDougall among them.

At Fort Good Hope in the Christmas season and in summer one finds the so-called "Gens du Large"—People of the Big Country—with their furs to trade. These folk come mainly from the northern and western shores of Great Bear Lake. One band hails from the Lockhart River; of still another band epidemics have left a scanty half-dozen survivors, who hunt on the Anderson River into which the Lockhart flows, and mix with the other Gens du Large Indians who are found along the latter stream. One trader who constantly deals with these Indians calls them "the most barbarous folk on the river"; but another, repudiating the assertion, points out that they constantly intermarry with the Indians on the Mackenzie and have sent their children to the mission schools. Last fall they sacrificed a large part of their profits because in the middle of the marten season they waited for a sick man to die, that they might close his eyes. He could not have gone to heaven had he died with his eyes open; and for themselves it would not have been "good medicine" to leave him.

At Fort Norman, Mr. D'Arcy Arden, the Great

Bear Lake trader whom I have previously quoted, boarded the boat for the journey upstream as far as Fort Wrigley. He is the sole permanent white resident on the shores of Great Bear Lake, and he is peculiarly well informed regarding it. His statements indicate the need of drastic revisions in the Government map published in 1921. On that map a dotted line of mystery and conjecture is drawn across the northwestern corner of the lake, at the end of Smith Bay. There should be an extension of this bay, which is locally known as Good Hope Bay, in a southwesterly direction for nearly a hundred miles—a distance about as great as that from New York to Philadelphia, of which the map has nothing to say. Moreover, this map presents the blank white paper of ignorance instead of the mountain ranges north and east of the lake—reaching a height of approximately four thousand feet in the north, three thousand feet (the Coppermine Mountains) in the northeast, and three thousand feet at the east, where inlets (not shown on the map) run back for thirty, forty, and fifty miles, with cliffs sheer out of the deep water, over two thousand feet high. The lake has never been officially sounded, but at the eastern end Mr. Arden has obtained depths exceeding six hundred fathoms. The best harbor in the southwest is at Russell Bay, not far from the site of Fort Franklin, where there used to be a post of the Hudson's Bay Company. On the southern shore are extensive deposits of marine fossils. Mr. Arden, who is astronomer and geologist as well as trader, believes the shore line with all its indentations might measure as much as four thousand miles, which would be twice that of Newfoundland.

In certain portions of the lake, fish are abundant. There are three varieties of trout, weighing at the maximum between sixty and seventy pounds, and on the average twenty pounds. There are two sorts of whitefish, herring, bluefish (Back's Arctic trout), suckers, jackfish. The inconnu ("connie") of Mackenzie waters is not found.

Between Great Bear Lake and the sea is a region which is a last refuge of the musk-ox, and as such should be surrounded by stringent hunting regulations of the Government. At present the protection is supplied by the nature of the region itself. No natives go in here, for there is virtually no wood. The southern part is mountainous and there are many lakes. Mr. Arden has traversed the eastern end from Dease River, where his home is, to Stapylton Bay, and—though he never enlarges a difficulty—he admits that it is the hardest kind of going.

The outstanding event of the homeward passage was the cheering announcement at the Norman Oil Well, where we halted half an hour to take aboard A. W. Harris, the level-headed and likable superintendent, and a crew of drillers whose work was done. Three men were left to care for the plant in the winter. Two days before our arrival—to wit, on July 19th—at a depth of 991 feet, the toil and worry of two years had their reward. In twenty minutes twenty-seven barrels flowed, and—what is far more significant—the well had settled down to a steady production of about seventy-five barrels a day. Three hundred-barrel oil tanks had been filled, and in default of other tanks and of transportation it becomes necessary to cap the well. At the depth now reached considerable difficulties in

the way of going deeper are encountered. Cave-ins are frequent in the quicksands. An encouraging circumstance is that the gas-pressure is greater than it has been before.

Until some way of bringing out the oil is devised and financed, the oil production is of local rather than general moment. But it seems already safe to assume that shales and tar-sands and seepage in the Mackenzie region have only begun to tell their story, and that the faith of pioneers will be justified in the rich fruits to be plucked by posterity if not by themselves. The Hudson's Bay Company might even have a fleet of river steamers burning oil in 1923. Then it would not be necessary to let the now superfluous oil of this well run into the river. When the oil-burners come, the passengers will lose a romantic picture, and considerable healthful calisthenics, but the gain to commerce and to human progress will be great.

CHAPTER XIII

FIRE

As the little steamer nosed a scow up the Athabasca River toward McMurray, we could tell from the yellowish gray haze in the distance and a faint blue mist over the river that somewhere—it might be a hundred miles or more away—the forest was afire. To left and right of where we were gliding along the hot, wide stream, placid as oil itself, the spruces stood eighty feet high, straight as ramrods. To any lover of trees, of creatures little or large that run among them, of Indians whose home is in the woods and by the lakes and streams, it is always a poignant distress that lives of trees, of animals, of men are constantly paying for the carelessness of those who light fires in the woods and do not put them out.

This is a story told me by a fair and thoughtful trader who deals with the very tribes of Indians concerned in the tragedy. We were leaning over the boat-rail looking at the smoke in the sky as he talked to me.

In July, 1919, twenty-eight Indians were at a small lake northeast of Big Island Lake, which is in Saskatchewan north of Bear River, close to the Alberta line. Some were Saulteux (Jumpers) and some were Cree. They were there to hunt and to dig seneca roots, which are exported to the Japanese for throat trouble.

They were encamped in tents on the north side of the lake, and a breeze blew from the south. In the evening they saw fire in the south, but thought they were safe from it and, rolling themselves in their blankets, they fell asleep.

The lake is a mile square, and dense spruce woods enclosed it. Midnight came. One woke, and sprang to his feet choking and half-blinded. His shouts aroused his comrades. The other side of the lake was a fiery furnace. From it the sparks shot skyward and were blown to the north side, where the Indians were, on the scorching breath of the whirlwind. Then, as the Indians described it, the flame came billowing over the lake like the "rolls" of hay that some of the far-traveled among their number had seen gathered in by horse-rakes on the prairie. Boughs and leaves aflame came hurtling like scorching flails to the devastation of the little canvas camp. Even huge embers of glowing charcoal were rained on them as from a volcano. It was Pelée in miniature, and far from all hope of rescue.

Some rushed to the canoes, to find them afire. Then they took to the lake. To raise their heads above the surface was to be engulfed in a sheet of flame. It was as if the water itself were burning. Soon their flesh was roasting on their backs and shoulders. Some were caught and burned in the tents: in their despair they cowered under the blankets, refusing to leave, till the fire found and consumed them.

One man made his escape, found a horse somewhere, and rode seventy-five miles to the Indian agent at Cold Lake Reserve. Then the agent rode thirty miles to Bonneville and routed out the nearest physician, Dr.

Sebourin. When he got to the lake several days had elapsed, and the scene that met his eyes was one of horror unmitigated. Twelve of the twenty-eight Indians were dead, and the rest were dreadfully burned. They lay about gasping in agony, rolling and moaning, or frantic with the pain of burns for which they had no medicaments. The decayed flesh on some of the bodies even of the living was deep as the first joint of one's finger: the flies had settled there and the worms crawled. Gangrene had set in. Ears and noses were burned away, and lepers could not have presented a more appalling picture of disfigurement. Tents, blankets, dogs were gone; there were only blackened stumps where the great green trees had been. The other Indians of their tribes at Big Island Lake, when they heard of their plight, helped them out; the traders forgot all thoughts of profit, and gave as much as they could.

That is but one sorrowful example of a menace which the Government of Canada to-day faces with determination. Aëroplanes have been pressed into service to scout and to report, and even to carry fire-fighting apparatus promptly to a conflagration. The same criminal negligence that is Canada's bane is responsible for a large part of the monstrous annual fire losses in the United States.

It is usually not the guilty who suffer. The incendiaries, as a rule, "make their get-away" and go scot-free. It is those who must make their living in the woods who are the victims. Often they dwell in obscure and remote, inaccessible regions. Frequently they are poor. Their appeal is inarticulate. They command no important political influence. They can-

not cohesively formulate and present their cause. It must be done for them by those who understand and sympathize.

Even the matter-of-fact, "practical," unsentimental man of business knows very well that this is not a grievance of the æsthete and the sentimentalist. None realizes better than he the cost in dollars and cents of sheer carelessness, and he is no friend of the fool who camps in a magnificent plantation of the greenwood, as though it were all his own, and leaves the glowing coals to ruin it for all who come after him.

CHAPTER XIV

GOLD

WITH a shovel and a frying-pan," said one of the restive deck hands musingly, "a poor man who has staked a claim is capitalized for placer-mining."

"You need a pick, too," corrected another in whose eyes the wanderlust of the Yukon smoldered still.

A third man tilted his chair back against the fresh-painted rail of the steamer deck and added, "If you go down deep, you gotta have a rope."

"Don't forget the gold-pan," a fourth sagely observed.

Then they sat silent for a while; and after that one man made a remark disparaging to flies, another spoke regretfully of the dried apple pies he left behind him at the last post, a third believed aloud that a steam laundry in the right place with the right prices would pay, and the last member of the quartet averred that, no matter how you cussed out the country when you went away, sooner or later you came back to it sorry that you ever left it.

"You oughta ha' seen the last bunch o' 'sour-doughs' this boat brought out," he said. "They came down to Winnipeg to see the sights. They spent all their time in front of the Hudson's Bay Company store lookin' in at the windows, pinin' to be back North."

The talk, grave or gay, drifted most of the time

over the surface of things, like a spruce plank from the sawmill afloat on the oil-placid stream.

But far beneath what the tongue of any told, each man was thinking, and dreaming in his heart. The dream was of gold. It has been the tantalizing *ignis fatuus* of all the ages. The Roman knew it when he wrote of the *"auri sacra fames"*—the accursed thirst for the precious metal. It made men "rivals"—the word meaning those who dwell on the banks of a stream and hence are quarrelsome for what is in it. How many a trail, North and West, is white with the bleaching bones of those who under the flagellation and the spur of a yellow glint in stone or gravel went on deliriously in the quest, with a never dying expectancy that only an inveterate fisherman can even approach? "Hope springs eternal" might have been written of the gold-diggers. Always they stand ready to take a gambler's chance and throw the dotted cubes again. Their goddess is blind Luck, with her foot on a roulette wheel. She never yet was as good to them as she will be. "The game is more than the player of the game," and the prospector has the burning fire in the veins that is the same on the green baize of Monte Carlo as on the green banks of the North Nahanni or the Peace.

The confirmed "sour-dough" brings you a piece of white quartz, blotched and discolored, and asks you to believe that it is free-milling gold ore that he has come upon, in a shaft on an island in a lake. You get out a pocket magnifying glass and examine the specimen closely. It turns to you facets as barren as the moon's face seen through one of "Uncle John" Brashear's famous lenses. Here is a patch of rose-pink, uneven

as the volcanic corrugations of our satellite. Here is a region of faint amethyst, and here is a tract as brown as the skin of gingerbread. Where is the gold? What is there to distinguish these prosaic stones from railway-ballast? You look more narrowly—and lo! the tiny spicules of gold are clinging to the dark places like snow that nestles in the crevices of the mountains after summer has melted the rest of the white mantle.

The zealot is at your ear with his glib appraisal. You learn from him that this bit of rock would assay at $40 and this other at $60 a ton. Here is another piece that has $100 a ton legibly written all over it. You finger the auriferous rock with a respect that borders upon awe. So the trail to fabulous wealth is blazed by such indications as these!

Then you begin to hear of this man or the other with an outfit as small as that which has been mentioned, who came in with his own two hands for his whole working force, and stayed a year, and took out $300,000. No man ever thinks of himself as among the failures: he sees "his own vast shadow glory-crowned" as winner of the capital prize. Those who went under lie mute, inglorious, unable to testify.

A song of songs yields a million dollars to a publisher: straightway the market is flooded with lyrics just as good as this which touched the throbbing public pulse. The hall bedrooms are overpopulated with Stephen Fosters and Septimus Winners of whom the world never has heard and never will hear. But it is useless to tell them they were better advised to drive a baker's wagon or peddle tinware. You would rob the artist of his birthright to create—you would deprive

the world of a masterpiece which on the morrow it will acclaim.

And so, if you try to persuade the inveterate pursuer of the phantom gold to leave off and settle down—it were better that you saved your breath to cool your porridge, for never will it cool his ambition. His ailment is incurable. He has heard the whisper that comes to the elect: he steadfastly believes that the gateway for him stands forever ajar to the Promised Land.

"I like to be traveling," said one whom I met after he had walked sixteen miles over a tormenting portage through the woods. He was supposed to be coming away from the North, but here at the threshold his foot lingered, his resolution faltered. Voices from the wilderness at his back, and from the world before him, were calling, and by night or day would not be still. His was the true passion of those who care so much to strive and to seek that they are almost aggrieved when they arrive and find. If they should stumble on riches, great would be their bewilderment, amounting to discomfiture, and pathetically ludicrous their prodigality.

What would they do with the money? Only what they know to do. They would buy things to look expensive and to breed envy. The wife must have the costliest furs—furs that fairly shout their price-mark at you. She must have ropes of pearls to wear in public. There must be a new big house with an iron fence and statues on the lawn, and a weary museum of curios within. They must travel. Not as in the old days, by canoe, with beans and bacon, or by dog-team, with dried whitefish. No: the rich man must wear a screaming waistcoat and a cable-like chain of gold—apt

symbol of the fetters round his neck, and enringing his very life. He must fill out the picture of a vested interest.

The travel will not be the same. It is not merely that it now becomes the luxurious idleness of cabin-de-luxe and Pullman stateroom. It is not merely that the mushroom Crœsus is dragged from city to city that he does not see and from language to language that he does not understand. The great, the abysmal difference between the bygone days and the dull, lusterless present is that the lure is gone. There is nothing left to find. When Peary came to the Pole after the years of struggle thither, it was truly the last of earth for him; the zest in life for him no more existed: his object finally attained, the lasting regret was greater than the exhilaration of a triumph. In fact, the sense of conquest was as nearly nil as could be. The Pole was like innumerable places that were not the Pole. There was nothing now to do but face about and come back home to be told by multitudes, then in the valley of decision, that he had never been to the top of the world at all.

The gold-seeker is a figure far exceeding, in all values of romance and high adventure, the gold-finder. The one who has "made his pile" is too likely to have sacrificed everything else to that. He is as materialistic and beautiful as the hard ore that lies before me. The glint of gold does not redeem the crude, anfractuous setting in which it is embedded. The man who is really worth his weight in gold does not wear it on his waistcoat, or emblazon it in his manner and his talk. For his gold—refined gold—is of the other sort, that no balances and crucibles assay.

CHAPTER XV

"OUTSIDE"

IN THE vast upper room of the hemisphere that we know as the Northwest Territories are living some five thousand Indians and Eskimos and fewer than five hundred persons who are actually, and not merely nominally, white. Can you get these white folk to confess their loneliness? By no means—except in the rarest instances. Their joy is in their isolation. The exceptional ones are those who came north too late in life to bend their ways to the custom of the country. They never could make up their minds to forgo the slippered ease and the fleshpots of civilization. They shivered when it was cold, they thought of the wintertide only as a hibernation enforced, they longed for spring to come and for summer to continue: they never developed the mettle and the hardihood to deride the thermometer. It is the other sort who, building their lives into the life of the wilderness country, have illustrated in our own day the virtues we attach to such as signed the compact in the cabin of the *Mayflower* or blazed the trail with Marcus Whitman and Lewis and Clarke; or showed "one equal temper of heroic souls" with Franklin, Hudson, and Champlain.

At the frontier post of Fort Macpherson, at the head of the Mackenzie Delta, the patriarch is John Firth, who came out from the Hebrides at eighteen and has lived on the same ridge of sand for fifty-two years.

From the door of his log hut he looks across the "muskeg" of swamp land, over the silver reaches of the Peel River, to where the chain of the Rockies dwindles to the Arctic foreshore. The higher peaks before him are giant tumuli of white for most of the year and even in the fierce and quickening radiance of the brief summer are streaked and spotted with snow. At his back are the North Wind, the aurora borealis, and the sunset.

Down river and on the plains to the eastward are moose and caribou and musk-ox; on the islands, floes, and bergs alongshore are polar bears and foxes. Here at home are willing dogs to pull him thirty miles a day, and Indian neighbors who shake his hand and are deferential. He wears a medal for more than thirty-five years of service with the Hudson's Bay Company, and has put by a competency for an old age

"serene and bright
and lovely as a Lapland night."

He married a half-breed wife who has been fond and faithful; his quiver is full of children, and grandchildren to clamber on his knees and run their fingers through his apostolic beard. He has books to read, and a pipe to smoke, and a few "men that were boys when he was a boy" to talk with now and then, of the great times that used to be. What more could he want or the gracious Fates confer?

It was my mistake to suppose that he might want a taste of towered cities—that he might long to quaff the draft of the elixir of life in Edinburgh or London, New York or Montreal. Not so. I was far out in my reckoning. He craved no greater happiness in his

declining years than to remain exactly where he was, with houseless space on all four sides of him. As Chaucer's shipman loved "his moon" so John Firth loves his sun and stars and all the company of heaven. He knew where the wind blew free and keen and unsullied from the Pole, and he would not have it tarnished with the soot and murk of cities. He did not want the outspew of the mine-pit and the mill-stack against his blue and dazzling infinitude of sky. He would not have the immaculate whiteness of the clouds that drifted besmirched by the miasmatic breath of crowded towns. Rather be chief in a little Hyperborean village, the ocular if not the titular owner of mountain ranges, woodland tracts, and lakeland marches, rivers flowing through "caverns measureless to man," the treasures of the ice and snow.

"Yes," John Firth answered me from somewhere behind his beard, "I went out once. It was in 1903. I went to Winnipeg." There was a long pause. The interval, for him, was filled no doubt with a mental moving picture of railway stations and hotels, of hectic people and electric cars moving both ways along a crowded street—not like his River, which moves one way forever, and averages not more than two small steam packets to churn it with their paddles in more than a thousand miles.

"You can stand the Outside for a while," the oracle proceeded, "but after that it gets monotonous."

Monotonous! I had thought that the monotony was all with him—the life-spicing variety all with me. But in a sentence he put by the pity that I had for him. My lot, not his, was pitiable. My lot was cast, my daily bread was wrested. amid millions. I was, as

Francis Thompson wrote of Cecil Rhodes, "lonely in crowded life." He had established and maintained his individuality. He was not merely one more for the census-taker: he was an upstanding and outstanding integer; I, among "the forgotten millions," was but a cipher with the rim removed. I had thought that life beyond the 65th parallel or so was life beyond the pale: but I was now to learn that the Arctic Circle is the inner circle, and the real outsider is—of course—the one who lives "Outside."

Silenced, but not quite convinced, I sought out a sententious trader at Arctic Red River, and with my arm round his black dog I ruminated what he told me. "I went out to Vancouver once," he pontificated. "I don't remember now what year it was." The august, epic sweep of his right hand as he spoke dismissed chronology to the limbo of unnecessary things. Time —on those rare occasions when time is recognized in the Far North—never flies; it flows.

"I did not like it," he proceeded, deliberate as a glacier. "I never could make up my mind to cross a street. There were always vehicles and crowds in the way. The buildings were too high. You can usually tell when a mountain or a tree is going to fall. But you cannot be so sure of a house that is made with hands.

"I was visiting my daughter, and I did not want her to know that I was restless and lonesome for the North. So I would go down to the docks—the same docks where Bishop Bompas made his bed, the time he came out of the North and was homesick for open space. I would get on the little excursion steamers that traveled up and down, for that made me feel at large

again: it gave me the sense of room enough. But I never told her where I went. She has become a dancer; she cannot keep her feet still; she gets it from me."

I liked the sturdy point of view of that paladin some centuries misplaced, D'Arcy Arden. (It is a pleasing name to take upon the tongue—it sounds half Avalon, half Avon.) From his coign where Dease River comes in and Sir John Franklin winter-quartered, he lords it and broods it as far as he cares to look. He had his say.

"I never want to go back to civilization!" was his final emphasis. "I like to read books about astronomy and geology, because I have astronomy always over me and geology all round me. But the day's news, months old, means nothing. Europe can get along without me; I can manage without Europe."

The man at Arctic Red River had rolled up the centuries as a scroll: this man was putting aside the continents one by one. Asia, to him, was no more than a sandpile and a hot breath swirling it; why go to Africa for ivory, when the walrus of his Coronation Gulf yield all the cribbage-boards the Eskimos can possibly require? Why ravage South America or vex India or triturate the Lesser Celebes for copper or cereals or diamonds, silks or pearls or spices, when untold and untellable riches lie sequestered in the halls of the northern mountain kings—coal and copper, oil and gold?

Lo! the poor Outsider, what he loses, what he misses! He may subscribe for missionaries—and great good these valiant teachers and preachers and nuns have done for the land these many years. But let him, in his sympathy for Pierre Ratfat and Elsie Drymeat and Mrs. Lameduck and Maria Never-Cries

and Rabbit's Lung and Peter Snowshoe be a little sorry for himself as well. They and their dogs may hunger now and then; disease may come and find only a quavering incantation to resist his entrance into the teepee and his plucking of the first-born. A man's foot may freeze; or his ax may slip; or his canoe may sink; or his dogs may die; and the pain of "Maria Chapdelaine" is the pain of Keewatin, Franklin, and Mackenzie as well as of Ontario. But there are compensations; and many a man has gone away with a curse on the land, and a fervent promise to his soul that he would not return, only to find that in a city street the lure pursued him like a Mænad, night and day, and would not let him go. The Outsider cannot know: the Insider never can make clear to him the grip that holds, the urge that stirs and never sleeps. The "cheechaco" (the man who has never seen the ice go out) and the "sour-dough" (the man who has learned to save a little of his bread to be the leaven of the next baking) do not talk the same language. But when two Insiders meet—they are as the men who fought at Château-Thierry or in the Argonne. They lock hands and they look into each other's eyes, and they know without a word.

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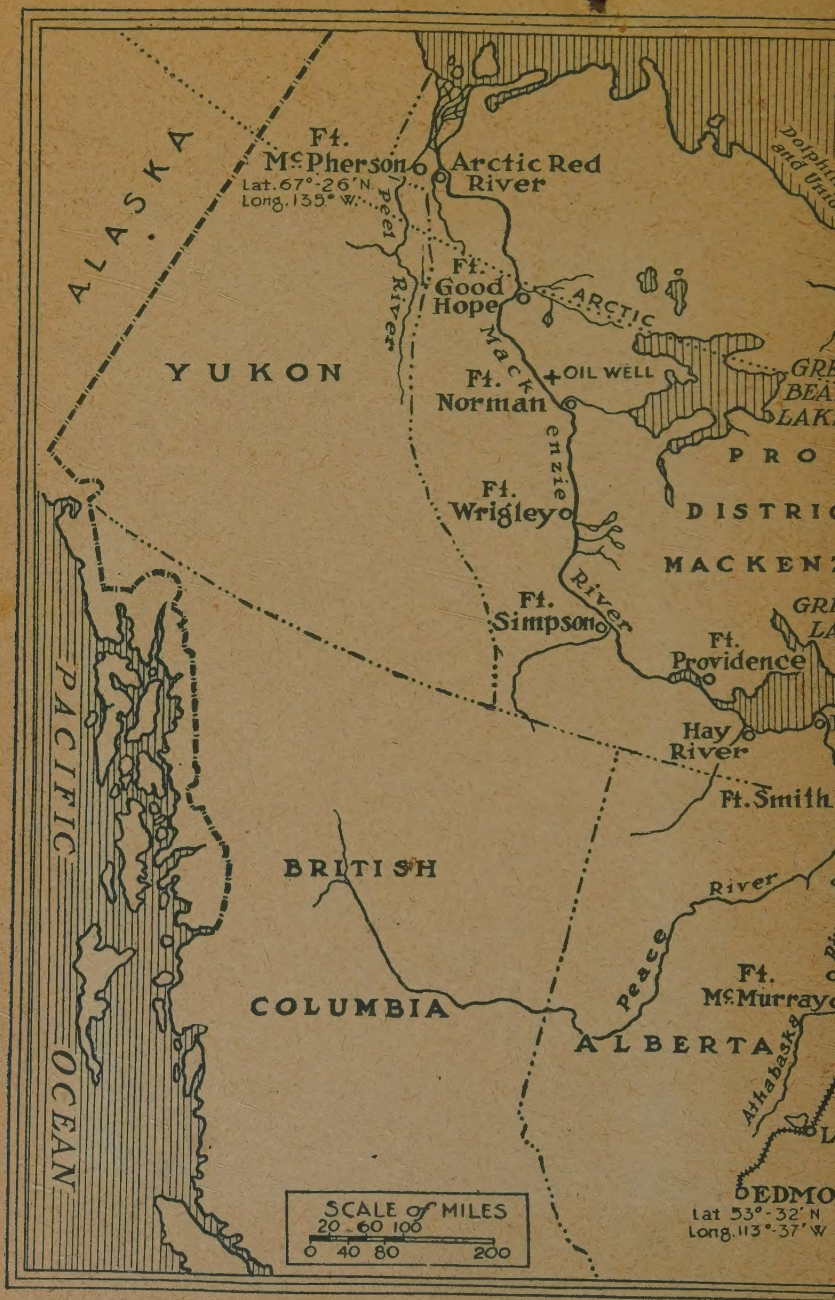
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